HUNTER TRAVEL GUIDES

MIAMI & THE FLORIDA KEYS ALIVE!

Lisa Simundson

VISIT…

Miami and the Florida Keys Alive!

Lisa Simundson

Hunter Publishing, Inc.

MIAMI
& THE FLORIDA KEYS
ALIVE!

Lisa Simundson

HUNTER

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Reliable, detailed and personally researched by knowledgeable authors, the *Alive!* series was founded by Harriet and Arnold Greenberg.

This accomplished travel-writing team also operates a renowned bookstore, **The Complete Traveller**, at 199 Madison Avenue in New York City.

About the Author

Lisa Simundson is a lifelong resident of Miami and a frequent visitor to the Florida Keys. Now a freelance travel writer, she was previously the editor of a local visitors guide and the managing editor of a national travel industry publication, for which she covered Florida, Latin America and the Southeastern United States.

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For David, Kelly and Veronica

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We Love to Get Mail

This book has been carefully researched to bring you current, accurate information. But no place is unchanging. We welcome your comments for future editions. Please write us at: *Alive Guides*, c/o Hunter Publishing, 130 Campus Drive, Edison, NJ 08818, or e-mail your comments to hunterp@bellsouth.net. Due to the volume of mail we receive, we regret that we cannot personally reply to each letter or message, but your comments are greatly appreciated and will be read.

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Introduction

Welcome to Miami and the Keys, a subtropical oasis of fun-in-the-sun excitement on the southern tip of the Florida peninsula. Get ready for a day at the beach and a night on the town; a culinary tour of the world and an exploration of fascinating cultures and history; shopping sojourns that lead from the biggest malls down to the smallest roadside stands; and wildlife expeditions that lead to a "river of grass" and below the waves to the only living coral reef in the continental US. It's all here in the place where major highways end and adventures begin – Greater Miami and the Florida Keys.

Yes, you can say them in the same breath. But you can't experience them in the same day, or even really compare them as the same destination in any way. Where the Keys are laid-back and carefree, Miami is fast-paced and energetic. Though both were geographically isolated from the rest of the country in the early years of the 20th century, Miami has "opened up" and developed into a major metropolis while the Keys still remain somewhat secluded.

That's why combining them both into one vacation is so exciting and satisfying. You literally get the best of both worlds.

A Brief History of Miami

The 20th Century

1920-1940

Miami's population had grown to 29,571 by 1920, an increase of 440% from the previous decade.

One man figures prominently in the modern history of both Miami and the Keys: **Henry Flagler**. In a prescient move in 1896, the Standard Oil executive extended his Florida East Coast Railroad to Miami, paving the way for the development of tourism, which would become Miami's dominant industry by the mid-1900s.

HENRY FLAGLER

Henry Flagler originally intended for Palm Beach to be the terminus of his Florida East Coast Railroad, but severe freezes in 1894 and 1895 made him re-think his decision. Legend has it that South Florida pioneer Julia Tuttle mailed Flagler a fresh orange blossom from Miami in the middle of that winter, leading him to head southward. Actually, Mrs. Tuttle offered Flagler half her property in the then-unincorporated community of Miami if he would extend the railroad and build a grand hotel. Flagler complied, and the city of Miami was incorporated in July of 1896. His exclusive Royal Palm Hotel opened in 1897.

Miami went through a number of booms and busts, including a devastating blow in 1926 when a major hurricane in September killed more than 100 people and caused millions of dollars in damage, putting an end to what had been a vigorous land boom. But the city recovered and went on to establish itself as a major aviation center with the birth of Pan American World Airways, which connected Miami to a number of Central and South American cities by 1935. At the same time, Eastern Airlines was flying daily between Miami, New York, Chicago and intermediate cities. Miami's early '20s land boom included the development of Coral Gables, Miami Shores, Hialeah, Miami Springs, and Opa-Locka.

Also during this period, a new architectural style was drawing national attention to Miami – **Art Deco**. Between 1935 and 1941, more than 200 Art Deco hotels were built on Miami Beach, and tourists flocked to visit them. Though the picturesque region declined in later decades, its renaissance began in 1979 when it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the renovations began. Today, Miami Beach's Art Deco District and South Beach are among Florida's most popular destinations.

The flight of a Fokker F-7 from Key West to Havana on October 28, 1927 marked the birth of Pan American World Airways.

The Post-War Boom

Another boom period in Miami followed World War II, with construction, tourism and aviation the leading industries. Land was protected and set aside for recreation with the creation of sprawling parks like Crandon, Cape Florida State Recreation Area, Biscayne National Park and Everglades National Park. Meanwhile, a new facet of the tourism industry was developing – cruising. Miami was a perfect location

for a port, and it didn't take long before the city became known as "the cruise ship capital of the world."

The Cuban Influx

Another significant milestone occurred during the 1960s, something that changed Miami's social, cultural and economic landscape forever – the arrival of thousands of Cuban refugees fleeing a Communist regime. To say their arrival had a major impact is something of an understatement. Today, Miami is as much Spanish-speaking as English-speaking, and has developed into the "crossroads of the Americas" for business and finance.

Following the Cubans came smaller influxes of immigrants from Central America, Haiti and other Caribbean and Latin nations.

Miami Today

Today, Miami's mix of cultures has created a colorful mosaic that gives it the flavor of other lands without the hassles of foreign travel.

For the visitor, Miami's cultural diversity yields rich rewards, from gourmet dining and unique shopping opportunities to restaurants and stores offering dazzling diversity with a special tropical tang – meals and merchandise that are just not available anywhere else. Miami's concerts and art galleries, sporting and cultural events, museums and book fairs, and especially its festivals, are also seasoned with this potent tropical brew. Taste and enjoy!

EARLY INHABITANTS

The first human inhabitants of South Florida were the Native American ancestors of the Calusa and Tequesta Indians who migrated here and established permanent villages at the mouth of the Miami River. Then came the trickle that was soon to develop into a tidal wave: the arrival of the Europeans. First came the Spanish, then the English, bringing European diseases and warfare with them. By 1763 – the year Spain ceded Florida to the British – the Calusas and Tequestas were virtually wiped out.

They were followed by Creek Indians migrating from Georgia, Alabama and the Carolinas, who came to be known collectively as the Seminoles. In 1830, after Congress decreed that all Indians living east of the Mississippi River had to move west to Oklahoma, these hardy Seminoles refused to surrender their freedom and join the "Trail of Tears," engaging in three wars with the US Army before finally retreating into the vastness of the Everglades.

The descendants of these brave, proud people are today's Seminole and Miccosukee tribes, who still live in South Florida.

Visitors to Miami can observe day-to-day life in the Miccosukee Tribe, located off US-41 in the western reaches of Miami-Dade County. The Miccosukees also operate a lavish resort, complete with gaming casino.

A Brief History of The Keys

The 1800s

Well before Flagler's railroad set Miami on the road to becoming a major metropolis, Key West was a thriving community of commerce and industry, populated by settlers from the Bahamas and New England who began arriving after Florida became a US territory in 1821.

These first settlers established prosperous fishing, sponging, turtle harvesting and wrecking industries. The latter industry, wrecking – or salvaging from ships run aground by bad weather or bad luck – came under fire by the US government who suspected local wreckers of deliberately luring unsuspecting navigators onto dangerous shoals. In 1825, legislation was passed requiring salvage from wrecks in US waters to be brought to an American port of entry. It turned out to be a boon for the Keys' wrecking industry, and soon Key West became one of the new country's wealthiest cities. (Unfortunately for these new entrepreneurs, the wrecking industry began to wane with the advent of effective lighthouses.)

Early Keys industries included wrecking, sponging, farming, fishing, turtle harvesting, cigar making, salt and charcoal making.

During this same period, cigar makers from Cuba established successful factories in Key West, and Bahamian farmers familiar with the techniques of coral-island farming began settling in the Upper Keys. They were joined by homesteaders from around the US. Soon, there were productive groves of Key limes, tamarind and breadfruit throughout

the Keys, while a profitable pineapple industry flourished in the Upper Keys during the late 1880s and early 1890s.

This was the climate of prosperity that existed when Henry Flagler decided to extend his railroad to Key West. For the most part, Flagler's decision was based on the fact that Key West was the country's closest deep-water port to the canal that the US government planned to build in Panama, and he wanted to take advantage of trade with Cuba and Latin America as well as additional trade via the Panama Canal.

The 1870 Key Largo Census listed about 60 people.

The 1900s

In 1912, the Florida Overseas Railroad to Key West – dubbed "the railroad that went to sea" – was completed. Unfortunately, the Keys' boom was swept away with the railroad in a 1935 hurricane. At the same time, the country was in the grips of the Great Depression and the Keys were not immune. Key West went bankrupt.

Like Miami, though, the Keys made a comeback with the construction of the Overseas Highway in 1938, which followed the same route as the railroad to Key West and opened the region to tourism. And once the tourists began arriving after World War II, the Keys' future was assured.

By 1942, there was a water pipeline and electricity throughout the Keys.

KEY WEST – ISLAND OF INSPIRATION

Tourists weren't the only ones who were enchanted by eclectic Key West. It's been said that the idiosyncratic nature and laid-back style of this two-by-four-mile island have nurtured the talents of more writers per capita than any other city in the country. More than 100 published authors live full- or part-time in Key West, while an equally prolific artistic community exhibits its works in local galleries. Among Key West's most illustrious artists-in-residence, past and present, are Ernest Hemingway, Tennessee Williams, Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Frost and Jimmy Buffett.

Miami

The Magic City

Rome may not have been built in a day, but it almost seems as if Miami was. In just 100 years, it has gone from a sleepy fishing village by the bay to an international metropolis and business center – where sleek office buildings rise alongside luxury hotels, where arts and culture not only thrive but redefine artistic frontiers, where local restaurants feature the flavors of many different cultures, and clubs sizzle until dawn.

Dining & Shopping

Miami can anchor a family vacation that includes the "kiddie carnivals" of Orlando, the islands of the Florida Keys and the Bahamas, or the unique ecotourism adventures of the Everglades, but it also works as an adult destination in its own right, sparkling with activity.

Here, visitors delight in gourmet dining and world-class shopping, discovering the diversity of restaurants filled with the flavors of Latin America and the Caribbean and shopping opportunities that run the gamut from boutique shops to enormous malls boasting their own tempting eateries.

From haute cuisine to haute couture, Miami's high-end restaurants and designer boutiques are quite posh, and the servers and salespeople dress accordingly. You'll probably want to dress for fine dining.

However, it's not unusual to see folks in shorts and tennis shoes browsing through the Gucci watches at an upscale boutique, especially in heavy tourist areas such as South Beach. At cultural events you might see everything from evening gowns to jeans.

Attractions & Nightlife

Miami's many moods also flavor the myriad concerts and cultural events, art galleries, museums, book fairs and festivals that fill its cultural calendar all year long.

If sports are your game, you've also come to the right place. Along with professional franchises in all the major sports, Miami is home to sprawling golf courses that host world-class tournaments; championship racetracks where sleek thoroughbreds race to the finish; Jai-Alai; greyhound racing; and motor sports events. And today's high rollers can tempt lady luck at local Indian gaming palaces or hop on luxury ships that sail out beyond the limit of the law for some big-stakes gaming.

Mega-city though Miami is, the glory of nature is never far away, from the blue waters and green inlets fringing the coast to the sawgrass-and-mangrove swamps of the Everglades along its westernmost boundaries.

When the sun sets, many visitors head back east toward South Beach, holiday kingdom of the night. Here, in a Deco-designed district of pastel neon, clubs throb with a mesmerizing mix of music, from salsa to reggae to hard rock. Daytime visitors to South Beach enjoy the boutiques, beachfront parks, charming restaurants and cafés and art galleries. But at night, the rhythms of South Beach's club

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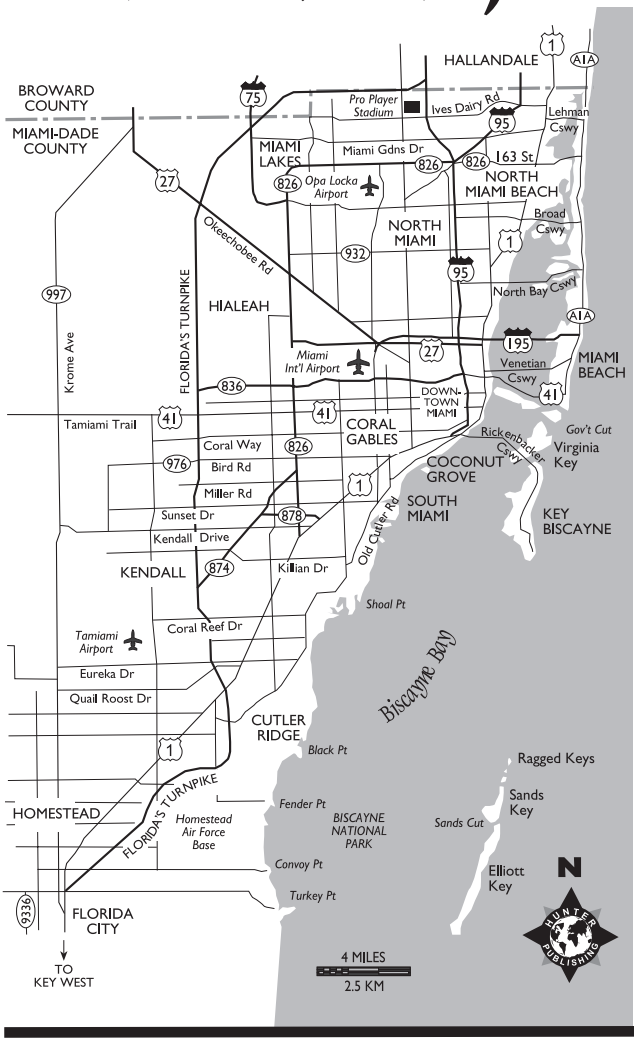
Miami & Vicinity



scene overwhelm the beat of the Atlantic thundering onto the famous beaches, giving way to the tropical sunrise that lights the way home to luxury hotels after evenings full of revelry.

Accommodations

With its dual status as a convention and tourism destination, Miami's hotel variety is staggering. All the major chains are here, from business-friendly airport hotels to sumptuous, full-service beach and golf resorts and gleaming, high-rise and high-style city hotels. And don't forget the Art Deco masterpieces of South Beach – small boutique hotels lining Ocean Drive and Collins Avenue offer personalized service, unique amenities and fascinating histories.

The price range among hotels (see pages 142 and 143 for scale) is just as varied, but expect to pay more for high-end accommodations offering elegant amenities and a prime location. Prices also go up in season, which runs from November to April.

Orientation

The Magic City of Miami is a mosaic of distinct and diverse nationalities and neighborhoods. Each area of the city has its own culture, characteristics, cuisines, sights, style, and shopping opportunities, lending the flavor of far-off places right here in the Florida sunshine.

Key Biscayne & Virginia Key

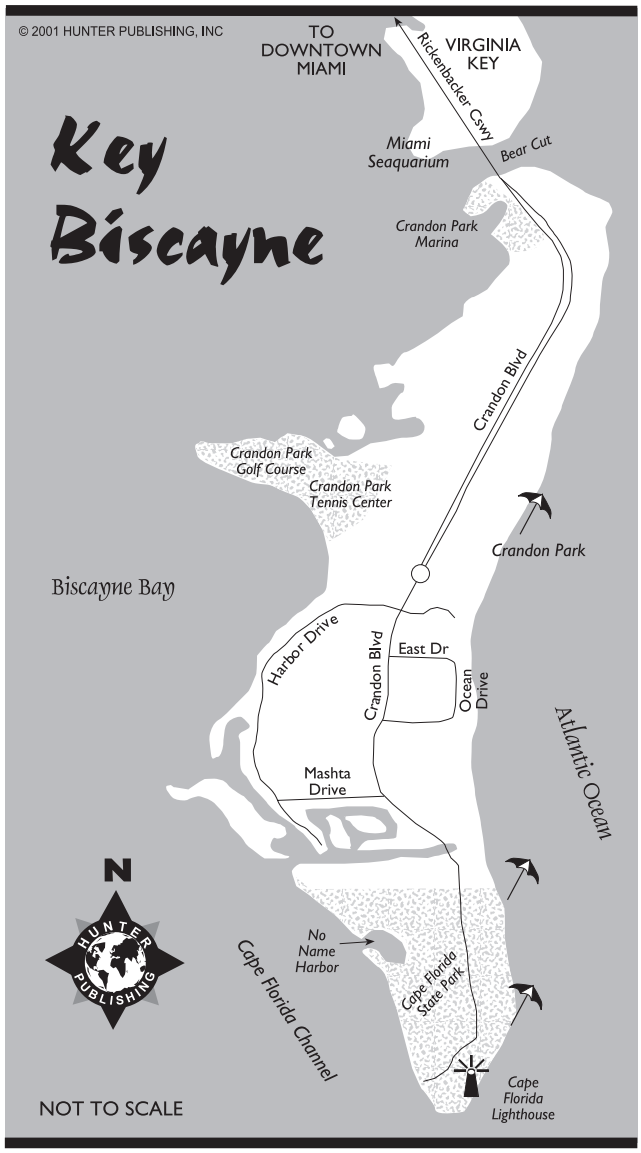
The archipelago known as the Florida Keys begins with Virginia Key and Key Biscayne, a park-studded paradise just a 20-minute drive from Miami International Airport across the scenic **Rickenbacker Causeway**.

Both islands boast spectacular beaches with crystal clear waters. Attractions include the **Miami Seaquarium** marine mammal park, where superstars Lolita the Killer Whale, Flipper the Dolphin and Salty the Sea Lion perform.

Beaches, bike trails, and nature tours are the starring attractions at Key Biscayne's two picturesque parks, **Crandon Park** and **Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Recreation Area**. Part of the island is developed with homes and hotels, to make the most of the delightful location, the surrounding parks, and the thundering surf. In addition to swimming, Crandon Park offers tennis and golf in secluded sylvan settings. Cape Florida harks back to an earlier day, with landscapes created by nature and the famous Cape Florida lighthouse perched at the very edge of the island, recalling the days of old.

Miami Beach

Mention Miami and the first thing that usually comes to mind is an image of the world-famous beach, with mile after mile of sparkling waters, golden sands, tanned tourists, celebrity-studded hotels, and neon-lit nightlife. The images are glitzy and glamorous, and surpassed only by the reality. Miami Beach is legendary as a resort destination, and is con-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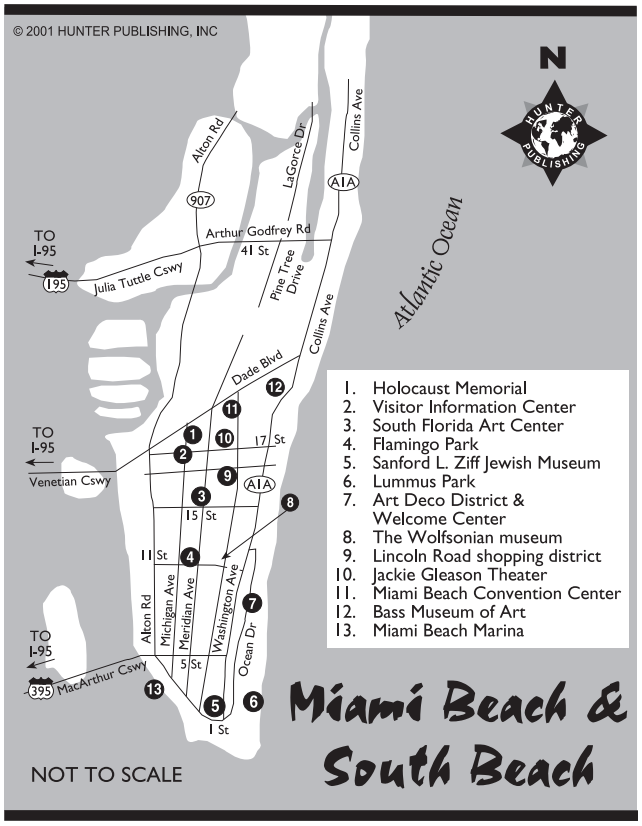
TO DOWNTOWN MIAMI
VIRGINIA KEY
Rickenbacker Cswy
Key Biscayne
Miami Seaquarium
Bear Cut
Crandon Park Marina
Crandon Blvd
Crandon Park Golf Course
Crandon Park Tennis Center
Crandon Park
Biscayne Bay
Harbor Drive
East Dr
Crandon Blvd
Ocean Drive
Atlantic Ocean
Mashta Drive
N
HUNTER PUBLISHING
No Name Harbor
Cape Florida State Park
Cape Florida Channel
Cape Florida Lighthouse
NOT TO SCALE

stantly renewing and renovating to catch the waves of the newest upscale tourist expectations.

Miami Beach is easily reached from the mainland by crossing one of several causeways traversing Biscayne Bay, and it stretches from **South Beach** to **North Shore**. Farther north are the oceanfront enclaves of **Surfside**, **Bal Harbour** and **Sunny Isles**.



South Beach

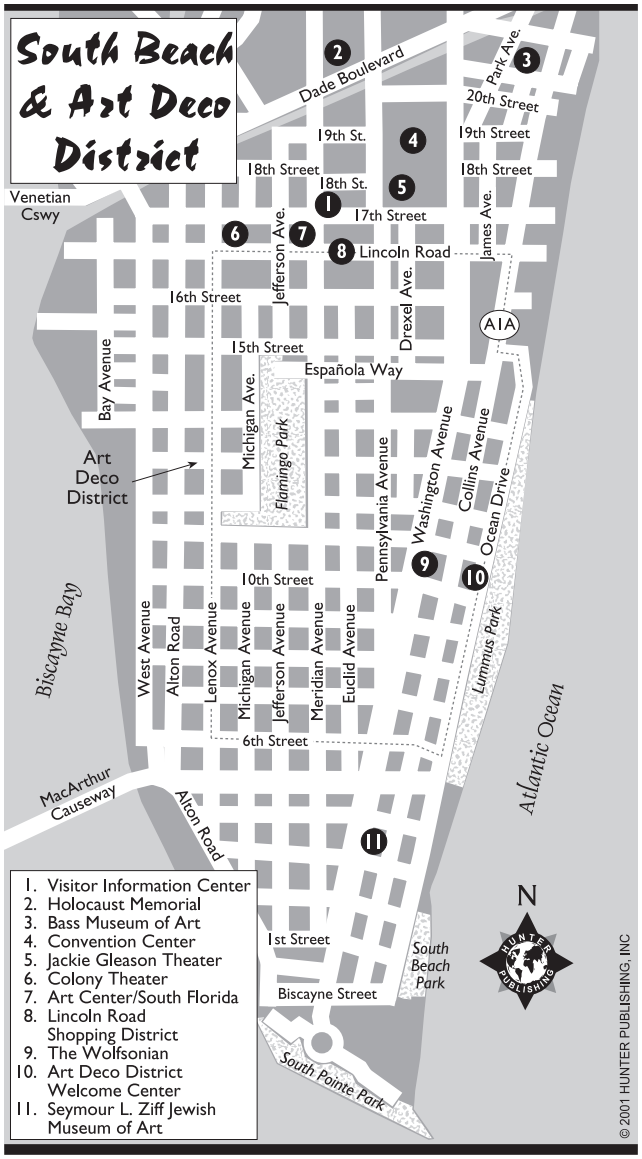
The world of South Beach may seem familiar because it has been featured in so many films and photographs. In fact, Greater Miami and the Beaches is now the third largest center for film and television in the country, and many companies have moved their operations to South Beach.

One of the things that makes South Beach so photogenic is its distinctive architectural style. Many well-known South Beach hotels were built in the 1920s and 1930s. This elegant era is known for its streamlined architecture and design with pastel colors and whimsical details, in the style called **Art Deco**. These landmarks have been restored to their original opulence to meet today's demands.

A block north of Lincoln Road is the Jackie Gleason Theater, offering full seasons of Broadway productions along with top-name concerts and other performances.

South Beach has experienced tremendous growth during the past decade, with endless opportunities for dining, shopping, and the arts. The streets of South Beach are lined with shops and boutiques offering everything from designer clothing to fine art. Along **Lincoln Road's** lively pedestrian concourse, boutiques and art galleries mix with sidewalk cafés and restaurants in an open-air ambience of fun and vitality.

South Beach after dark is the best of the zest – a carnival kingdom of the night. The rhythms of the club scene throb with the thrilling pulse of the tropics, and musical styles ranging from hard rock to salsa reflect the mosaic of Miami itself. It's the ultimate nighttime adventure.


South Beach & Art Deco District
Dade Boulevard
Park Ave.
20th Street
19th St.
19th Street
18th Street
18th St.
17th Street
Venetian Cswy
Jefferson Ave.
Lincoln Road
James Ave.
16th Street
Drexel Ave.
A1A
15th Street
Española Way
Bay Avenue
Michigan Ave.
Flamingo Park
Art Deco District
Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington Avenue
Collins Avenue
Ocean Drive
10th Street
Biscayne Bay
West Avenue
Alton Road
Lenox Avenue
Michigan Avenue
Jefferson Avenue
Meridian Avenue
Euclid Avenue
Lummus Park
Atlantic Ocean
6th Street
MacArthur Causeway
Alton Road
1st Street
South Beach Park
Biscayne Street
South Pointe Park
N
1. Visitor Information Center
2. Holocaust Memorial
3. Bass Museum of Art
4. Convention Center
5. Jackie Gleason Theater
6. Colony Theater
7. Art Center/South Florida
8. Lincoln Road Shopping District
9. The Wolfsonian
10. Art Deco District Welcome Center
11. Seymour L. Ziff Jewish Museum of Art
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Surfside

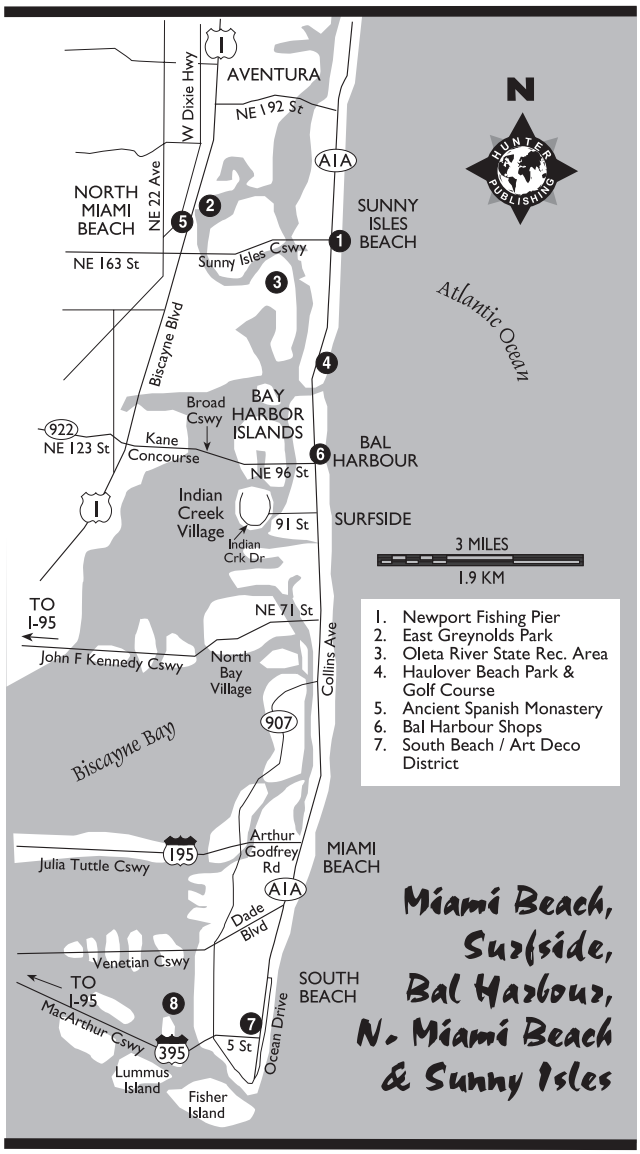
While each neighborhood of Miami Beach has year-round residents as well as tourist venues, Surfside is the place that really looks like a residential area, with quiet, attractive homes, personalized places of worship and mom-and-pop corner stores. The same delightful beach is here, too, but with a bit more serenity and elbow room. Here, too, is the **North Shore State Recreation Area**, a landscaped stretch of shoreline that is especially family friendly. A variety of shows and events are presented year-round on the Art Deco-style outdoor stage at the **Surfside Community Center**.

Bal Harbour

A small and stylish community farther north along Miami Beach, posh Bal Harbour boasts a distinguished beachfront, with high-rise hotels and condos to take full advantage of the ocean. **Bal Harbour Shops** offers upscale merchandise from top designers in a unique garden setting of tropical foliage and waterfalls. Shops include the largest Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue in Florida, along with such names as Cartier, Versace, Gucci, Hérmès, Louis Vuitton, Tiffany & Co., and Chanel.

Sunny Isles

Just north of Bal Harbour is the seaside community of Sunny Isles, sharing a bit of elegance with its neighbor, but in an altogether less formal atmosphere. Many of the hotels here are designed with fanciful ’50s motifs, while glorious beaches, scenic


AVENTURA
NE 192 St
W Dixie Hwy
NE 22 Ave
A1A
NORTH MIAMI BEACH
SUNNY ISLES BEACH
NE 163 St
Sunny Isles Cswy
Atlantic Ocean
Biscayne Blvd
Broad Cswy
BAY HARBOR ISLANDS
922
NE 123 St
Kane Concourse
BAL HARBOUR
NE 96 St
Indian Creek Village
91 St
SURFSIDE
Indian Crk Dr
3 MILES
1.9 KM
TO I-95
NE 71 St
John F Kennedy Cswy
North Bay Village
Collins Ave
907
Biscayne Bay
Arthur Godfrey Rd
195
Julia Tuttle Cswy
MIAMI BEACH
A1A
Dade Blvd
Venetian Cswy
TO I-95
MacArthur Cswy
395
SOUTH BEACH
5 St
Ocean Drive
Lummus Island
Fisher Island
N
HUNTER PUBLISHING
1. Newport Fishing Pier
2. East Greynolds Park
3. Oleta River State Rec. Area
4. Haulover Beach Park & Golf Course
5. Ancient Spanish Monastery
6. Bal Harbour Shops
7. South Beach / Art Deco District
Miami Beach, Surfside, Bal Harbour, N. Miami Beach & Sunny Isles

bike paths, and golf and tennis facilities offer relaxing diversions. The popular **Newport Fishing Pier** at Collins Avenue and 170th Street also draws a lot of Miamians, who know from long years of living here that the big fish are waiting for their hooks just below the water.

Northeast Miami

Aventura

Style and elegance define the northernmost Miami neighborhood of Aventura, where high-price high-rise condos look out over the water, and luxurious homes and estates cluster in this newest of the area's small cities, incorporated in 1995.

The area's largest shopping center is **Aventura Mall**, with free motorcoach service from downtown and Miami Beach. More than 250 shops cluster around six major anchors: Bloomingdale's, Macy's, Burdines, Lord & Taylor, JCPenney and Sears. There is an equally lavish choice of restaurants, including The Cheesecake Factory and Wolfie's deli.

North Miami Beach

This mostly residential area boasts some spectacular sights and lush tropical parks. **Greynolds Park** has been named a historic site, and is one of Miami's oldest parks. Here, scenic pathways meander through meadows and marshland, and labyrinthine waterways lead to a beautiful blue lake, where colorful boats are available for rental. A golf course tempts

the sportsmen, and an ersatz castle crowning the highest hill lends the park a touch of whimsy.

The nearby **Ancient Spanish Monastery** demonstrates authentic Old World grandeur; it is an actual 10th-century structure from Spain, dismantled and reassembled here. Now surrounded by gardens and open to the public, the quiet cloisters are a corner of medieval calm in the midst of modern Miami.

North Miami & Miami Shores

One of Miami's original wonders was a natural stone bridge that once formed part of an important Tequesta Indian trail. It came to be known as **Arch Creek Bridge** and was a popular tourist site at North Miami's **Arch Creek Park**. Although the original span collapsed in 1973, it was re-created in 1987 by Lewis Van Dercar, a local artist, and the site is surrounded by a host of activities at the park, including a nature center and museum, and a bird and animal sanctuary.

Central Miami

Downtown

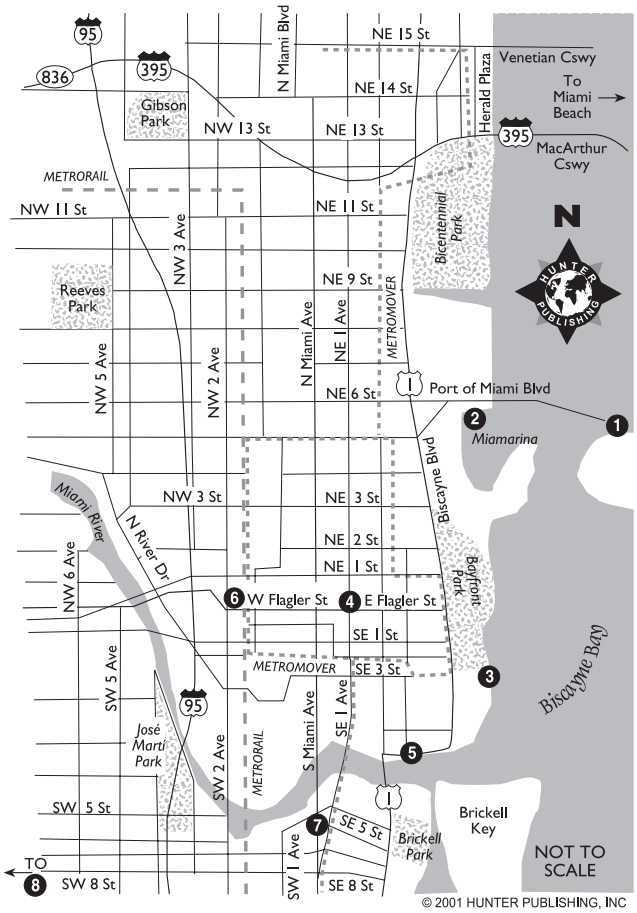
High-rise skyscrapers, lit by colorful floodlights, reflected in the dark waters of Biscayne Bay – this is the nighttime skyline of Miami's downtown. The resplendent view takes on a whole new aspect in daylight, however, as downtown booms with all the hustle and bustle of a major business, banking, and government center. The commercial crossroads of the Western Hemisphere, Miami's busy downtown

is also a major tourist destination, with **Bayside Marketplace** its crown jewel. Easily accessible from all public transportation, this open-air complex of shops, boutiques, restaurants and cafés also features regular live entertainment, and is the point of embarkation for the sightseeing cruise boats that sweep across the beautiful blue waves of Biscayne Bay.

Next door to Bayside is **Bayfront Park** – site of frequent concerts and events – as well as the new **American Airlines Arena**, home of the Miami Heat pro basketball team. Heading west from the bay is the downtown shopping district, where shoppers will find bargain prices on merchandise ranging from electronics and jewelry to clothing and sporting goods. Nearby is **Gusman Center**, which hosts the annual Miami Film Festival, and the **Metro-Dade Cultural Center**, home to the **Miami Art Museum**, the **Historical Museum of Southern Florida** and the **Miami-Dade Public Library**.

Hotels and fine dining abound to serve the business traveler as well as the holiday crowd. The international flavor of the city is reflected in its cuisine; a wide array is available in atmospheres as varied as a quiet café, Continental bistro, or a party boat serving dinner on the waters of Biscayne Bay.

Downtown Miami



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1. Port of Miami
2. Bayside Marketplace
3. Chopin Plaza
4. Gusman Center / Olympia Theater
5. Ramada Dupont Center
6. Metro-Dade Cultural Center: Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Miami Art Museum, Main Public Library
7. Tobacco Road
8. Little Havana

★ DID YOU KNOW?

South of the Miami River, the Brickell Avenue area of downtown, now a glittering canyon of towering office buildings and residences, was originally the homestead of **William Brickell**, a founding father of Greater Miami.

Overtown

Located on the northern end of downtown Miami, Overtown was the center of the thriving African-American community in the 1920s, then went into an inner-city decline. It is now in the midst of a rebirth and a new pride. The **Overtown Historic Village** incorporates, in a few blocks, the highlights of the area's history. Here you'll find the house of **D.A. Dorsey**, Miami's first African-American millionaire; the **Lyric Theater**, where the greats of the jazz world used to perform; and the **Greater Bethel AME Church**, a focal point for Civil Rights and spiritual uplift. Overtown is also the locale of the **Miami Arena.**

Little Havana

Just west of downtown Miami is Little Havana, an area of modest homes and shops where those who fled Communist Cuba have re-created a bit of their beloved homeland. The streets are alive with Spanish conversation, the sidewalk cafeterias serve *café Cubano* along with popular Cuban dishes, the parks are filled with elderly men engrossed in games of

dominoes, and the quaint shops offer cigars made in the finest Cuban tradition at local factories and hand-embroidered *guayabera* shirts made by local garment workers.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

The *guayabera* shirt, a Cuban import, is distinctive for its two vertical pleats, four spacious pockets and, in some styles, detailed embroidery. Boasting lightweight fabrics designed to weather the tropical heat, the shirts can be found in a variety of colors, and are considered acceptable business attire for men during Miami's sultry summers.

The annual festival known as **Carnaval Miami** celebrates Miami's Cuban heritage and culminates each March in **Calle Ocho** – called the world's largest block party – which explodes along SW 8th Street in an outpouring of music, dance, and sparkling effervescence.

The Calle Ocho street festival draws more than a million people in a celebration of the Latin legacy.

Little Haiti

Immigrants from Haiti have clustered in the neighborhood formerly known as Lemon City (situated in northeast Miami, from 39th Street up to 94th Street, west of Biscayne Boulevard), and given it a flavor all their own. The walls of many buildings are decorated with stunning murals by local artists, manifesting the nostalgic pride that these folk from the first black republic in the Americas feel for their

homeland. The **Caribbean Marketplace** in the heart of the area is a shopping center designed as a look-alike of the famed Iron Market in Port-au-Prince. The exotic architecture and the unique wares offered by local vendors bring the aura of the distant island to mid-Miami, and French/Haitian is the *lingua franca* of the thriving streets and many churches.

Coconut Grove

Colorful, quirky, and culturally diverse, Coconut Grove is delightful. Just south of downtown Miami, this is a distinctive area of quaint tropical beauty and unique village charm, and has been a center for arts and artists for decades. One of the few neighborhoods in Miami that can be explored entirely on foot, "the Grove" tempts visitors with restaurants, ice cream parlors, antique shops, bookstores and boutiques. The street charm is embellished by a series of festivals and events throughout the year, including the Bahamas-inspired **Goombay Festival**, the boisterous **King Mango Strut**, and the nationally famous **Coconut Grove Arts Festival**.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

Miami's City Hall is located on **Dinner Key** in Coconut Grove, so named because early Grove residents made it a favorite picnic spot. Originally an aviation training base during World War I, the building later served as a base for Pan American World Airways, then was leased as a restaurant until 1954, when it was designated the City Hall of Miami.

Coral Gables

The lush tropical foliage of Miami inspired builder George Merrick, in the 1920s, to create an affluent community of Mediterranean-style buildings with arched entrances, iron grillwork and red barrel-tiled roofs. His planned community is set among tree-lined streets and winding waterways and, to evoke images of Old Spain, he christened his streets with Spanish names. This is the "City Beautiful" of Coral Gables.

Culture and cultivated taste abound here. Coral Gables is home to the **University of Miami**, the oldest university in the Greater Miami area, which houses the **Lowe Art Museum**, featuring changing exhibits by local and international artists. On **Gables Gallery Night**, the first Friday of every month, the Coral Gables Gallery Association sponsors free walking and bus tours of the area's many art galleries.

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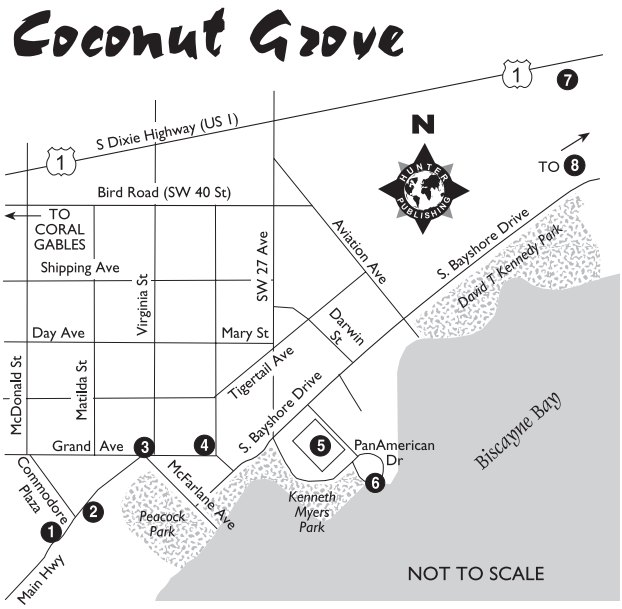


1. Coconut Grove Playhouse
2. The Barnacle State Historic Site
3. CocoWalk
4. Mayfair House & shops
5. Coconut Grove Convention Ctr
6. Dinner Key Marina
7. Museum of Science & Planetarium
8. Vizcaya

Coral Gables' **Miracle Mile** blends designer boutiques with major department stores along a beautifully landscaped promenade to offer some of the finest shopping in the area. Historic buildings, one-of-a-kind shops and charming cafés beckon walkers.

Fine dining here has an elegance that is characteristic of Coral Gables. Presenting a multitude of cuisines, many of the restaurants boast four- and five-

star ratings and take pride in reflecting the essence of the City Beautiful.

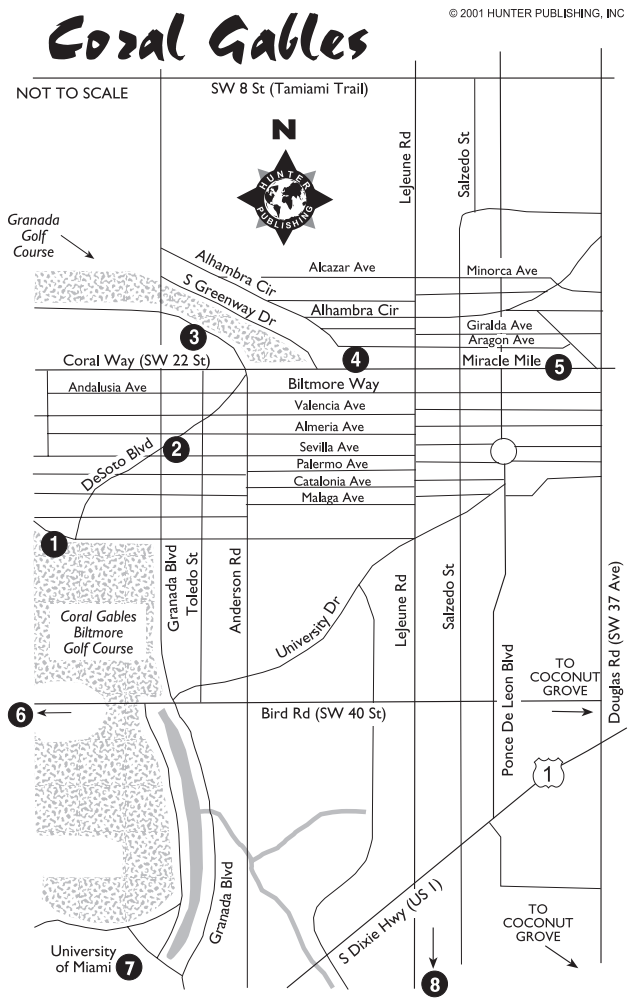
HISTORIC CORAL GABLES

Many of the buildings of Coral Gables are preserved as historic landmarks, among them the imposing **Coral Gables City Hall,** with its white columns outside and marvelous mural inside depicting Miami's history. Equally picturesque is the municipal **Venetian Pool**, fashioned from a rock quarry, where swimmers can splash through coves and grottoes, and even a waterfall, in an Italian Renaissance setting. The preeminent historic landmark of the Gables is the distinctive tower of the **Biltmore Hotel**, modeled after La Giralda in Spain, overlooking the newly renovated 1926 palace with its open-air courtyards and fountains, massive stone columns and marble floors.

Northwest Miami

Hialeah

Thundering thoroughbreds galloping towards the finish line – no question that this is the first image that comes to mind when the word Hialeah is mentioned. **Hialeah Park** racetrack, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is noted worldwide for its beauty, innovative architectural designs with native rock and tropical plantings, and the enormous colony of pink flamingoes who have made the park's lake their home since 1930. Although Hia-



1. Biltmore Hotel
2. Venetian Pool
3. George Merrick House
4. Coral Gables City Hall
5. Miracle Mile
6. To Tropical Park
7. University of Miami & Lowe Art Museum
8. To Fairchild Garden, Matheson Hammock Park, Parrot Jungle

leah's last race meet was held at Gulfstream Park in Hallandale, as an alternate location, Hialeah Park is a local landmark, and is open to visitors year-round. Contact the park for the current schedule; ☎ 305-885-8000, www.hialeahpark.com.

Hialeah is also known for excellent, budget-priced Latin dining, and for shopping at **Westland Mall**, which is anchored by JCPenney, Sears and Burdine's, plus 100 specialty shops.

Opa-Locka

An area of middle-class homes, Opa-Locka is characterized by the Arabian Nights theme imposed by its creators, Glenn Curtis and James Bright in the late 1920s. There are Moorish designs for the downtown buildings, with street names to match, and an absolutely incredible **City Hall** complete with minarets and elaborately painted domes – a kind of psychedelic Taj Mahal in tropical colors. Not depending on magic carpets, Opa-Locka has its own airport, which was a major aviation center in World War II, and is now used for private planes.

Miami Lakes

A mixed community of homes, apartments and businesses in a garden-like setting, Miami Lakes was designed as a self-contained community with a little bit of everything. There are superb golf links at its country club, some excellent hotels, and fine dining and shopping on Main Street, a pedestrian mall with a small-town feeling where festivals and events are held throughout the year.

West Miami & Airport Area

Visitors to Miami see two major shopping malls even before the plane lands. Arriving at Miami International Airport from the west, planes approach over the **Mall of the Americas** and **Miami International Mall**. Planned for a 2001 opening in this area is the **Dolphin Mall**, with outlets, specialty shops, theme-park-type rides and restaurants.

Tropical Park hosts the annual Santa's Enchanted Forest, complete with thousands of twinkling lights and kiddie rides.

Nearby **Tamiami Park** is home to a number of special events during the year, including the **Miami-Dade County Fair & Exposition,** which brings state-of-the-art excitement to traditional fairground frolic. Also nearby is **Tropical Park**, offering scenic walkways, fishing lakes, picnic areas and sports galore, including horseback riding.

Just east of the airport is the **Miami Jai-Alai Fronton**, said to be the oldest and largest arena of its kind in the US. Billed as the world's fastest game, jai-alai is a Basque specialty that is gaining in popularity throughout the country, but is still played with most the zest at the Miami venue.

South Miami-Dade County

Encompassing South Miami, Kendall, Goulds, Perrine, and Homestead, the southern end of Miami-Dade County offers an exciting world of attractions, parks, shopping centers and restaurants.

Visitors may feel that they are "on safari" as they sample southern Miami's many animal-oriented attractions, including **Parrot Jungle and Gardens**, **Monkey Jungle** and **Miami MetroZoo**. Another natural paradise is **Fairchild Tropical Gardens**,

with winding paths through sunken gardens and rainforests, past lakes and lily ponds and scenic overlooks, with exotic orchids, palms, cycads, and a gift shop that will enchant botany buffs. Nearby, **Matheson Hammock Park and Marina** features ponds and picnic areas, meadowlands and mangroves, and its very own blue lagoon for swimming.

In the high-tech world of man-made attractions, **GameWorks** at South Miami's Shops at Sunset Place combines games, attractions, music, video and technology in a slam-bang format that spells fun for all. And for high-speed excitement, the famous **Miami Grand Prix**, along with other NASCAR and Indy car racing events, is hosted at the **Homestead-Miami Speedway Complex.**

The county's south end also offers some fine shopping, from **The Shops at Sunset Place** (just south of Coral Gables) to **Dadeland Mall** in Kendall, to the dramatically landscaped **Falls** shopping center, and, farther south, the **Cutler Ridge Mall**, **Prime Outlets at Florida City**, and an antique district at **Homestead Main Street**.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

Once you reach Homestead, suburbia gives way to flat farmland, rows of crops, agricultural areas spreading green under the monumental clouds of the Florida sky, and soothing scenery with a special tropical touch.

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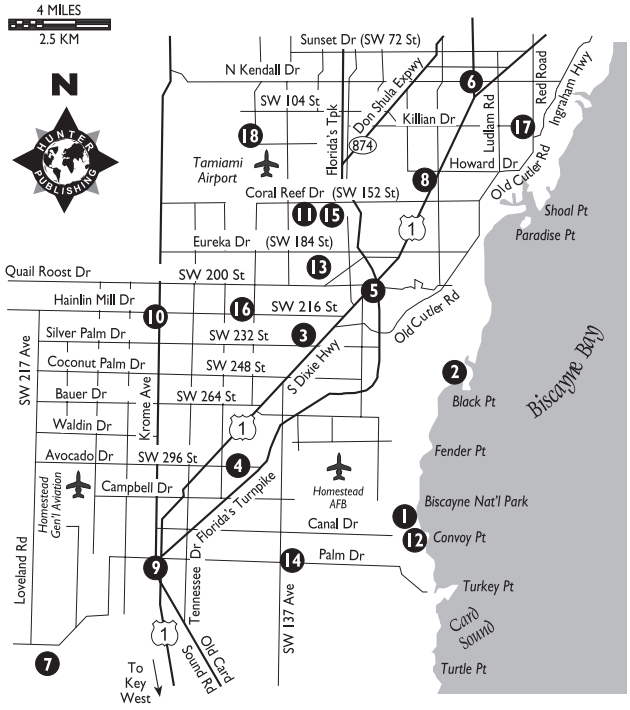
South Miami-Dade



1. Biscayne National Park / Visitor Ctr
2. Black Point Marina
3. Cauley Square
4. Coral Castle
5. Cutler Ridge Mall
6. Dadeland Mall
7. Everglades Nat'l Park & Everglades Alligator Farm
8. The Falls Shopping Center
9. Florida Pioneer Museum
10. Fruit & Spice Park
11. Gold Coast Railroad Museum
12. Homestead Bayfront Park & Marina
13. Larry & Penny Thompson Park
14. Homestead Miami Speedway
15. Metrozoo
16. Monkey Jungle
17. Parrot Jungle & Gardens
18. Weeks Air Museum

The Everglades

Located in the southwestern reaches of Miami-Dade County, the Everglades is a whole different world waiting to be explored – a world of sawgrass and alligator holes, of mangrove swamps and cypress trees, a world of vast blue sky studded with flocks of rare and beautiful birds. Threatened by draining and development, the wetlands were finally protected in 1947 with the creation of **Everglades National Park**, one of the country's largest parks. Today the park encompasses 1.5 million acres, and contains a visitor center, nature trails, a marina, boat rentals and camping facilities. The Shark Valley entrance to the park is about 35 miles west of Miami, and offers tram tours and bike rides.

If a smaller sampling of the Everglades is desired, there are many commercial airboat rides and alligator shows available. Some suggestions are Everglades Alligator Farm in Homestead, or Everglades Safari Park off Tamiami Trail. The Miccosukee Indian Village provides airboat rides into the Everglades as well as offering a glimpse into the lives of the Native American inhabitants of this wild kingdom. See the listing in *Attractions*, page 107, for more details.

The Everglades is actually a shallow, slow-moving river rather than a static swamp.

Getting Here

By Air

Greater Miami's main gateway is **Miami International Airport** (MIA; ☎ 305-876-7000; www.mi-

ami-airport.com), which is ranked third in the nation for international passengers and ninth for total passengers. MIA serves 115 cities in the US, Canada and around the world with non-stop service, and 37 cities with one-stop service. The following passenger carriers offer service in and out of Miami.

Domestic Airlines

Air Tran . . . . . ☎ 800-AIR-TRAN
America West Airlines . . . . . ☎ 800-235-9292
American Airlines . . . . . ☎ 800-433-7300
Comair (Delta Connection) . . . . . ☎ 800-354-9822
Continental Airlines . . . . . ☎ 800-525-0280
Delta Air Lines . . . . . ☎ 800-221-1212
Gulfstream Int'l (Continental). . . ☎ 800-992-8532
MetroJet by US Airways. . . . . ☎ 888-638-7653
National Airlines . . . . . ☎ 888-757-5387
Northwest KLM Airlines . . . . . ☎ 800-225-2525
TWA. . . . . ☎ 800-221-2000
United Airlines. . . . . ☎ 800-241-6522
US Airways . . . . . ☎ 800-428-4322
US Airways Express . . . . . ☎ 800-428-4322

International Airlines

Aces (Colombia) . . . . . ☎ 800-846-2237
Aerolineas Argentinas
(Argentina) . . . . . ☎ 800-333-0276
Aeromar (Dominican Republic). . . ☎ 305-871-4262
Aeromexico (Mexico). . . . . ☎ 800-237-6639

Aeropostal (Venezuela). . . . . ☎ 888-912-8466
Air ALM (Netherlands Antilles) . . ☎ 800-327-7230
Air Aruba (Aruba) . . . . . ☎ 800-882-7822
Air Canada (Canada) . . . . . ☎ 800-630-3299
Air Caribbean (Trinidad) . . . . . ☎ 786-265-0214
Air France (France). . . . . ☎ 800-237-2747
Air Jamaica (Jamaica) . . . . . ☎ 800-523-5585
Alitalia (Italy). . . . . ☎ 800-223-5730
Avianca (Colombia) . . . . . ☎ 800-284-2622
Bahamasair (Bahamas) . . . . . ☎ 800-222-4262
British Airways (UK) . . . . . ☎ 800-247-9297
BWIA (Trinidad). . . . . ☎ 800-538-2942
Canadian Air Int'l (Canada) . . . . ☎ 800-426-7000
Cayman Airways
(Cayman Islands). . . . . ☎ 800-441-3003
Copa (Panama). . . . . ☎ 800-359-2672
El Al (Israel) . . . . . ☎ 800-223-6700
Iberia (Spain) . . . . . ☎ 800-772-4642
LAB (Bolivia) . . . . . ☎ 800-327-3098
Lacsa (Costa Rica) . . . . . ☎ 800-225-2272
LanChile (Chile) . . . . . ☎ 800-735-5526
Lan Peru (Peru). . . . . ☎ 877-737-8001
Lauda Air (Austria). . . . . ☎ 800-588-8399
LTU (Germany). . . . . ☎ 800-888-0200
Lufthansa (Germany) . . . . . ☎ 800-645-3880
Martinair (Netherlands). . . . . ☎ 800-627-8462
Mexicana (Mexico). . . . . ☎ 800-531-7921
Servivensa (Venezuela) . . . . . ☎ 305-381-8001
Surinam Airways (Surinam) . . . . ☎ 800-327-6864
Swissair (Switzerland) . . . . . ☎ 800-221-4750

Taca (El Salvador) . . . . . ☎ 800-535-8780
Tam (Brazil) . . . . . ☎ 888-235-9826
Transbrasil (Brazil) . . . . . ☎ 888-827-2745
Varig (Brazil) . . . . . ☎ 800-468-2744
Virgin Atlantic (UK). . . . . ☎ 800-862-8621

★ DID YOU KNOW?

Called the "hub of the Americas," MIA is the primary connecting point for air travel between the Americas and the Caribbean and is a major gateway to Europe.

Transportation To & From the Airport

By Bus

Metrobus (☎ 305-770-3131) provides connections to Metrorail, Metromover, and Tri-Rail (☎ 800-TRI-RAIL), and is located on MIA's first level at the Concourse E bus station. You can pick up complete schedule information for Metrobus and **Greyhound** bus service (☎ 800-231-2222) at the information counter on the second level Concourse E or at the first level bus station.

By Rental Car

A number of rental car options are located at MIA. A complete list can be found in the *Getting Around* section, page 44.

By Taxi

Taxis are available on the arrival and departure levels. Flat-rate fares from the airport to various zones in Miami and surrounding areas range from $24 to $41 per trip.

By Van

Shared van service to destinations throughout Miami, Fort Lauderdale and Palm Beach County can be found on the first level in front of the baggage claim area. Though fares vary, expect to pay about $10-$15 per person from the airport to Miami Beach hotels, $20-$25 to Fort Lauderdale destinations, and up to $100 for a trek to Palm Beach County. Many hotels offer shuttle service from the airport; ask about this when you make your reservations.

Regional Air Services

Chalk's International Airlines offers seaplane service to the Bahamas, with three daily flights to Paradise Island, Bimini, Walker's Island and Great Harbour Key (1000 MacArthur Causeway, ☎ 305-371-8628). Chalk's also has six daily flights to the Bahamas from Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL).

Also departing from FLL, **Cape Air** has daily service to Key West aboard a nine-passenger Cessna (☎ 800-352-0714).

Kendall-Tamiami Executive Airport is located 15 miles from MIA and is open primarily for business, recreational and private flights (12800 SW 137th Avenue, ☎ 305-869-1700). Also welcoming private aircraft, **Homestead General Aviation Air-**

Biscayne Helicopter tours and charters and Weeks Air Museum are both located at Kendall-Tamiami Executive Airport.

port is the last stop for fuel on the way to Key West or the Bahamas (28700 SW 217th Avenue, ☎ 305-247-4883).

Largest of the county's general aviation airports, **Opa-Locka Airport** handles a variety of private, pleasure and business flights (14300 NW 41st Avenue, ☎ 305-869-1660).

By Bus & Train

Greyhound Bus Lines (☎ 800-231-2222) offers service into Miami from a host of major US cities, including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Atlanta.

Those who prefer to ride the rails can take **Amtrak** (☎ 800-USA-RAIL), whose Silver Service trains run from New York to Miami with stops at Philadelphia, Washington, DC, Richmond, Raleigh, Charleston, Savannah and Orlando.

By Car

If you're driving in on **I-95**, reaching Miami is a snap. Just head south and don't stop until you see the signs. The highway ends at **US-1**, the road that goes all the way to Key West. Florida's Turnpike leads to Miami through the **Golden Glades Interchange** in the northern part of the county. The **Homestead Turnpike Extension** merges with US-1 just north of the Keys.

DRIVING & TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

US law mandates driving on the right-hand side of the road and passing on the left. Right turns are permitted at red lights after stopping unless otherwise indicated by a sign or light at the intersection. Please observe posted speed limits: 15 miles per hour (mph) in school zones during designated hours, 30 mph in business or residential areas and 55 mph on most expressways. The speed limit on I-95 increases to 65 mph in Broward County. Florida's Turnpike and certain major expressways are toll roads.

All persons riding in an automobile are required to wear seat belts. Children younger than five years of age must be secured in government-approved child car seats.

By Water

Known as the "Cruise Capital of the World," the Dante B. Fascell Port of Miami-Dade is home to 18 cruise ships, with vessels from Carnival, Cunard, Norwegian Cruise Line, and Royal Caribbean International, and has the largest year-round cruise fleet in the world. The Port of Miami also handles more "megaships" – vessels capable of transporting more than 2,000 guests – than any other port in the world. In 1999, more than 3.1 million passengers went through the port's terminals. Anticipating a passenger load of 4.5 million by 2002, the Port has embarked on a multi-million-dollar terminal redevelopment program to expand and enhance facilities.

☎ 305-371-7678; www.metro-dade.com/portofmiami. For cruise information, contact the individual cruise lines.

Carnival Cruise Lines . . . . . ☎ 305-599-2600 or 800-438-7644

Cunard . . . . . ☎ 305-463-3000 or 800-728-6273

Norwegian Cruise Line. . . . . ☎ 305-436-4000 or 800-327-7030

Royal Caribbean Int'l . . . . . ☎ 305-539-6000 or 800-327-6700

Getting Around

Public Transportation

Greater Miami boasts an extensive public transportation system including bus and rail service. **Metrobus**' 75 routes serve the entire county up to 22 hours a day, covering all major business, entertainment and cultural centers, along with **Park & Ride** services to special events and lifeline services. The bus system also connects with Metrorail and Metromover.

Metrorail, Miami's elevated rapid transit system, runs for 21 miles from Kendall through South Miami, Coral Gables, and downtown Miami; to the Civic Center/Jackson Memorial Hospital area; and to Brownsville, Liberty City, and Hialeah, with connections to Broward and Palm Beach counties at the Tri-Rail/Metrorail transfer station. Parking is available at 18 Metrorail stations, with garage parking at the Dadeland South, Dadeland North and South Miami stations.

Metromover is an elevated train system serving downtown Miami, with a total of 21 stations on one inner Downtown loop and two extensions, Omni and Brickell. Metromover also connects with Metrorail at the Government Center and Brickell stations. With stations about two blocks apart, Metromover links many downtown office buildings, hotels, and retail centers, including the **Cultural Plaza** (Miami Art Museum, Historical Museum, Main Library), **Bayside**, and the **Brickell** business district.

TIP

For information about Metrobus, Metrorail, and Metromover, including fares and maps by mail, call ☎ 305-770-3131. Attendants are on hand to answer questions from 6 am-10 pm weekdays and 9 am-5 pm on weekends.

Tri-Rail is a commuter rail system linking Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties and providing free connecting shuttles from Miami, Fort Lauderdale and Palm Beach airports to the nearest Tri-Rail station (in Palm Beach County, ask for the Palm Tran shuttle); ☎ 800-TRI-RAIL.

Electrowave, the South Beach Express, is an electric bus service. Shuttle buses run along Washington Avenue from 17th Street to South Pointe Drive, and along 17th Street from Washington Avenue to Alton Road, with 30 stops along the way. Hours of operation are 8 am-2 am, Mondays-Wednesdays; 8 am-4 am, Thursdays-Saturdays; and 10 am-2 am Sundays and holidays. The fare is only 25¢ and exact change is required. ☎ 305-843-9283.

Car Rental

The following car rental agencies have counters at MIA, located on the first level of the terminal near the baggage claim area:

Avis . . . . . ☎ 800-331-1600
Budget . . . . . ☎ 800-527-0700
Dollar . . . . . ☎ 800-800-4000
Hertz . . . . . ☎ 800-654-3131
National . . . . . ☎ 800-227-7368
Royal . . . . . ☎ 305-871-3000

These car rental agencies are located away from the airport, but have quick shuttle service from MIA:

Alamo . . . . . ☎ 800-327-9633
Enterprise . . . . . ☎ 800-325-8007
InterAmerican . . . . . ☎ 800-327-1278
Thrifty . . . . . ☎ 800-FOR-CARS

Specialty Rentals

In addition to the rental car companies located at or near the airport, as well as throughout Miami-Dade County, there are other rental options you may want to consider. For example, how about traveling in style during your stay? You can tool around in a Porsche, BMW, Corvette, Bentley, Lexus, Mercedes or Mustang convertible from **Prestige Auto Rentals**, ☎ 305-895-0854.

Luxury rentals are also available from **Exotic Cars**, featuring names like Lamborghini, Jaguar, Rolls

Royce, Range Rover, Ferrari, Hummer and more; ☎ 305-876-9311.

You can go rugged with a Jeep from **Deco Drive Rentals**, ☎ 305-871-7980. Or if lots of room is a priority, **Specialty Auto Rentals** offers mini- and maxi-vans as well as cargo vans; ☎ 888-871-2770.

Taxis & Limousines

Taxis in Miami are dispatched, rather than hailed curbside. The average rate is about $3 for the first mile and $2 for every mile thereafter (subject to change). Most major taxi services operate 24 hours a day, including **Eastern Taxi**, ☎ 305-599-9999, and **Metro Taxi**, ☎ 305-888-8888.

Stretch out in a limo from **Admiral Limousine Service**, also offering sedan, van, mini-bus and motorcoach transportation, ☎ 305-899-9320 or 800-367-0422.

Limousine, sedan, van and mini-bus transfers are also available from **Aventura Limousine Transportation Services**, ☎ 305-770-5466 or 800-944-9886.

Bicycle & In-Line Skate Rentals

Bicycle along the beach or sail through South Beach streets on in-line skates. Coconut Grove and Key Biscayne are also great places to bike or skate, as are many of the parks in Greater Miami. You'll find rentals at the following locations. They may require a cash or credit card deposit.

Fritz's Skate & Bike Shop rents bicycles and in-line skates daily, 10 am-10 pm, at 726 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach, ☎ 305-532-1954.

Grove Cycle offers a variety of bicycles, including tandem bikes. They are open Tuesdays-Fridays, 11 am-7 pm; Saturdays, 10 am-7 pm; and Sundays, 11 am-6 pm; 3216 Grand Avenue, Coconut Grove, ☎ 305-444-5415.

Mangrove Cycles offers bike rentals, along with free maps of park and beach areas. Mangrove Cycles is open Tuesdays-Saturdays, 9am-6pm; Sundays, 10 am-5 pm at 260 Crandon Boulevard, Key Biscayne, ☎ 305-361-5555.

Miami Beach Bicycle Center rents bikes every day. They are open Mondays-Saturdays, 10 am-7 pm, and Sundays, 10 am-5 pm at 601 5th Street, ☎ 305-674-0150.

New at in-line skating? Skate 2000 offers free lessons on Sundays, from 10 am to noon.

Skate 2000's in-line skate rentals include elbow, knee and wrist guards. Open Mondays-Saturdays, 11 am-8 pm; Sundays, 10 am-5 pm, at 9525 South Dixie Highway, Kendall area, ☎ 305-665-6770.

Climate

Miami boasts a sunny, subtropical climate featuring cool, dry winters and warm summer days that frequently end in a quick afternoon shower to cool things off. The typical spring and fall seasons familiar to much of the United States are nonexistent here in the subtropics. Leaves don't turn gold and flowers don't suddenly bloom. Instead, year-round mild temperatures keep the landscape perpetually

green and lush. Ocean breezes also help moderate summer temperatures.

The following chart will give you an idea of average daily temperatures throughout the year.

Month	Low (°F)	High (°F)
January	59	75
February	60	76
March	64	79
April	68	83
May	72	85
June	75	88
July	77	89
August	77	89
September	76	88
October	72	85
November	67	80
December	62	77

Planning Your Trip

Information Sources

For more information about Greater Miami and the Beaches, including guides, brochures and maps, contact or visit the following information centers.

Visitors Bureaus & Centers

Art Deco Welcome Center at 1001 Ocean Drive, Miami Beach, ☎ 305-531-3484, www.mdpl.org, is open daily, 11 am-4 pm.

Bal Harbour Village information center, 655 96th Street, Bal Harbour, ☎ 305-866-4633, is open weekdays, 9 am-5 pm.

Downtown Miami Partnership, 25 SE 2nd Avenue (Ingraham Bldg.), Suite 1007, ☎ 305-379-7070, is open weekdays, 9 am-5 pm.

Greater Miami & the Beaches Hotel Association, is located at 407 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach, ☎ 305-531-3553 or 800-531-3553, www.gmbha.org, is open weekdays, 9 am-5 pm.

Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau is open weekdays, 8:30 am-5 pm, at 701 Brickell Avenue, Suite 2700; ☎ 305-539-3063, 305-539-3034 or 800-933-8448, www.tropicoolmiami.com.

Snapper Creek Tourist Information Center is open daily, 9 am-5 pm; Florida's Turnpike Extension, MM 19, ☎ 305-969-5927.

Sunny Isles Beach Resort Association Visitor Information Center, 17100 Collins Avenue, Suite

208, Sunny Isles, ☎ 305-947-5826, www.sunnyisles-fla.com. This information center is open weekdays, 9 am-2 pm.

Surfside Tourist Board is located at 9301 Collins Avenue, Surfside, ☎ 305-864-0722 or 800-327-4557, www.town.surfside.fl.us. They are open weekdays, 9 am-3 pm; till noon on Friday.

Tropical Everglades Visitor Association is open Mondays-Saturdays, 8 am-4:45 pm and Sundays, 10 am-2 pm; 160 US-1, Florida City, ☎ 305-245-9180 or 800-388-9669, www.tropicaleverglades.com.

Chambers of Commerce

The **Greater Homestead & Florida City Chamber of Commerce** is located at 43 N. Krome Avenue, Homestead, ☎ 305-247-2332 or 888-FLCITY1, www.chamberinaction.com. They are open weekdays, 8 am-5 pm.

Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce is currently located at 420 Lincoln Road, ☎ 305-672-1270, www.miamibeachchamber.com. The office is open Mondays-Fridays, 8 am-5 pm, and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-4 pm. In the fall of 2001, they are scheduled to move to a new facility at 1920 Meridian Avenue.

The office of the **Coconut Grove Chamber of Commerce** is at 2820 McFarlane Road, ☎ 305-444-7270, www.coconutgrove.com; it is open weekdays, 9 am-5 pm.

Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce, 50 Aragon Avenue, Coral Gables, ☎ 305-446-1657, www.gableschamber.org, is open weekdays, 8:30 am-5 pm; till 4 pm on Friday.

The **Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce**, 1601 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami, ☎ 305-350-7700, is open weekdays 8:30 am-5; till 4 pm on Friday.

The **Hialeah-Miami Springs-NW Dade Chamber of Commerce** is at 59 West 5th Street, Hialeah, ☎ 305-887-1515. Weekday hours are 8:30 am-4:30 pm.

The **Key Biscayne Chamber of Commerce**, 87 West McIntyre Street, ☎ 305-361-5207, www.keybiscaynechamber.org, is open daily, 9 am-5 pm.

Miami Beach Latin Chamber of Commerce, 235 Lincoln Road, ☎ 305-674-1414, is open weekdays, 9 am-5:30 pm.

Packing Tips

Miami's warm, sunny climate makes light resort wear the best choice for both men and women, although you may choose to dress more formally in the evenings for the theater, clubs and upscale restaurants. By day, shorts, T-shirts and tennis shoes are perfect for exploring local attractions and parks. If you'll be spending time in the water, bring a swimsuit or two along with a cover-up and sandals to get you between the hotel lobby and the beach.

By all means, don't forget sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat. You may even need insect repellent for Everglades excursions, depending on what time of year you visit. It's also a good idea to bring along a sweater or two, since winter nights can be cool, and the year-round chill of indoor air-conditioning can be uncomfortable for some.

If you forget something, don't worry. There are malls galore, drug stores on nearly every corner and all kinds of specialty shops to meet your needs.

Safety Tips

It's possible tourists may be more vulnerable to petty crime than the average person, simply because they're on vacation. They're relaxed, they've let their guard down... they're not thinking negative thoughts! Still, in a big city like Miami, a few words to the wise can prevent you from becoming a victim.

TAKE CARE

- Don't carry large amounts of cash. Use traveler's checks, if possible. If you must carry cash, separate it; don't keep it all in one place.
- Don't wear expensive jewelry and watches while sightseeing.
- Pickpockets are attracted to crowds. So if you are part of crowd – attending a festival, for example – be wary of someone who brushes against you or bumps into you. Ladies, hold purses in front, not on the side. Men, put your wallets in your front pants pocket. Fanny packs are a good way to go.
- If you're renting a car, be sure to ask the attendant for *exact* directions to your hotel. Then ask the hotel concierge for detailed directions to your daily destinations. Use maps, but plan your route

before setting out. Thieves are on the lookout for slow drivers and those who stop to ask for directions.

- If you do get lost, don't pull off to the side of the road. Drive to the nearest gas station or convenience store to ask for directions. If it's dark, drive to a well-lit, populated area before stopping.
- Don't stop for strangers, even someone who appears to be asking for directions. Unfortunately, you may regret being a "good samaritan."
- Keep your car doors locked and the windows rolled up while driving, and always lock the car when you leave it unattended.
- Never leave valuables in view and don't leave purses or wallets in the car under any circumstances.
- Bring your cell phone along or rent one while you're in Miami. In case of emergency, dial 911.
- If your car breaks down, turn on your flashers and raise the hood. Use your cell phone to call for help or walk to the nearest gas station or place of business.

Sunup to Sundown

Beaches

Public beaches run along the sand-fringed shores of **Miami Beach** from South Pointe Park north to Surfside and, beyond that, to Haulover Park just south of Sunny Isles. As a rule, beaches and parks are open sunrise to sunset. Most beaches offer restrooms and showers, with restaurants and cafés usually a short walk away. Twenty lifeguard stations dot the sands from the southernmost point north to 83rd Street, and lifeguards are on duty daily from 9:30-4:30, with longer hours during the summer; be extra cautious if you swim when lifeguards are not on duty. Public beaches are free, but bring along change for the parking meters. Parks and recreation areas usually charge an entrance or parking fee. For more information, call either the Miami Beach Parks and Recreation Department, ☎ 305-673-7730, or the Miami-Dade Parks and Recreation Department, ☎ 305-755-7800.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

The sands of South Beach from 5th Street to 21st Street are popular among topless bathers.

Miami Beach

Lummus Park
Ocean Drive from 6th to 14th streets – Amenities include walking trails and a children's playground, with sidewalk cafés across the street.

North Shore
Collins Avenue from 76th to 87th streets – Wooden boardwalks, shelters, and barbecue facilities invite picnicking, while visitors can work out on an exercise course or stroll the walking path.

Haulover Park Beach
A 1½-mile beach features shaded picnic facilities and concession stands. Across the street from the beach, Haulover Park has a full-service marina, a restaurant, tennis courts, a nine-hole golf course, sundries shop and a kite shop. 10800 Collins Avenue, ☎ 305-944-3040.

BEACH SAFETY TIPS

- Swim where – and when – there is lifeguard supervision.
- **Riptides** are strong currents that can carry even experienced swimmers out to sea. When riptides are active, signs are usually posted. However, if you do get caught in one, don't exhaust yourself trying to fight it. Swim parallel to the shoreline until you are free of the current, then swim toward shore.
- Watch out for **jellyfish** and **Portuguese man-of-wars**, especially if you have an

allergic susceptibility. If you are stung, a paste of meat tenderizer and water is a remarkably effective remedy.

- Heed **warning** or **caution** flags posted on the beach or at the lifeguard stations. Red means no swimming, yellow means caution, and green means "go!"
- Too many tourists get sunburned instead of suntanned, so use a **sunscreen** with an SPF of at least 15, even on overcast days, and especially between the peak sun hours of 10 am-3 pm.

Key Biscayne

Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Recreation Area
Cape Florida boasts lovely beaches, bicycle and nature trails, shoreline fishing, picnic pavilions, a historic lighthouse open for tours, the Lighthouse Café and watersports rentals. There is a per-car entrance fee. 1200 South Crandon Boulevard, ☎ 305-361-5811.

The Cape Florida Lighthouse was built in 1825.

Crandon Park Beach
Crandon Park's beautiful two-mile beach is considered one of the nicest in the Greater Miami area. Visitors enjoy its winding promenade, concession stands, multiple picnic areas with tables and grills, and convenient parking (there is a parking fee), while all ages appreciate the calm waters protected by an offshore sandbar. Also part of Crandon is a family amusement center, open daily, featuring a carousel, outdoor roller rink, dolphin-shaped splash fountain and marine play sculptures. On weekdays,

Crandon Park was once home to Indian tribes, soldiers, and pirates, and was also a huge coconut plantation at one time.

you can schedule an appointment to take a **Tropical Jungle Hayride**, which includes a 30-minute narrated tour. 4000 Crandon Boulevard, ☎ 305-361-7385 or 305-361-5421.

Hobie Beach
Along the Rickenbacker Causeway. In addition to swimming and sunning, visitors to Hobie Beach can rent windsurfing equipment and sailboats. No lifeguards are on duty at this location.

South Miami

Matheson Hammock Park Beach
Scenic Matheson Hammock Park features a man-made atoll pool, which is flushed naturally with the tidal action of nearby Biscayne Bay. The park also has a full-service marina, snack bar and restaurant, along with picnic pavilions and nature trails. There is a $4 per car parking fee. 9610 Old Cutler Road, ☎ 305-665-5475.

Homestead Bayfront Park Beach
Homestead Bayfront Park offers an atoll pool beach, snack bar, barbecue grills, large rental picnic shelter, playground and full-service marina. Parking is $4 per car. 9698 SW North Canal Drive, ☎ 305-230-3034.

SEA TURTLE NESTING & PROTECTION PROGRAM

Each year from April through October, Florida beaches host the largest gathering of nesting sea turtles in the US. Sea turtles once roamed the oceans by the millions but,

over the past few centuries, the demand for sea turtle meat, eggs, shells, leather and oil and loss of habitat due to urban development along the coasts have greatly reduced their numbers.

Since 1980, more than 300,000 endangered sea turtles have been hatched and released through the **Miami-Dade Parks Sea Turtle Nesting and Relocation Program**. Under the close supervision of Miami-Dade Parks' Beach Operations staff, which runs the Turtle Program, the nesting rate has gone from no nest sites at all in 1979 to 334 in 1999. The program supervises all nesting activity along 16 miles of Atlantic beachfront, from Key Biscayne to Sunny Isles, where there are nesting areas favored by these ancient creatures.

You can help protect turtle nesting sites by observing the following:

- Never approach turtles emerging from the sea or disturb or harass nesting turtles.
- Watch out for disoriented hatchlings or turtles wandering on the road.
- Be careful while boating to avoid collisions with turtles.
- Don't throw trash into the water or on the beach.
- When on or near the beach, keep outside lights off or minimized from April 1st to October 31st.

- Don't buy products made from sea turtles or other endangered species.
- If you find an injured or dead turtle, or see someone bothering a nesting turtle, notify the **Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission**, ☎ 800-DIAL-FMP.
- For more information, or to make reservations for special slide presentations and lectures, call Haulover Beach Park at ☎ 305-947-3525, Extension 0. For information on Crandon Park's slide presentation and hatchery tours (available seasonally), call ☎ 305-365-3018.

– Information provided by Miami-Dade Parks & Recreation Department, ☎ 305-755-7800, www.co.miami-dade.fl.us/parks

Watersports

Diving

Miami's dive scene is a wreck – literally. Not known as much for reefs but famous for wrecks, Miami's underwater environment includes a water tower, airplanes, more than 30 ships, tankers, and countless concrete and limestone structures, all purposely sunk to create artificial reefs. The results have been spectacular, as these sites are now home to fish, sponges and corals, creating a panorama of colorful sea life that divers and snorkelers will find fascinating.

Those looking for natural coral reefs can explore the **Emerald** and **Rainbow** reefs just off Key Biscayne as well as the reefs in **Biscayne National Park**.

> ★ **DID YOU KNOW?**
>
> Miami is home to one of the largest artificial-reef programs in the world and is frequently referred to as the "Wreckreational Dive Capital of the Americas."

Rates for dive excursions vary, but expect to pay between $50 and $75 for a standard two-tank dive. Rates usually include tanks and weights, though you will pay more if you're also renting a BC and wetsuit. Snorkel trips can range from $25 to $50.

A standard two-week certification course that includes open-water diving runs about $200, but many companies offer "quickie" courses that let you enjoy same-day diving for $100-$125. However, you will not be certified. For advanced divers, there are rescue dive and divemaster courses, available at higher rates.

Dive Operators

The following dive operators offer excursions to Miami's wrecks and reefs, as well as training and certification in many cases. Be sure to call in advance to book dives and instruction, especially during high season (October-May).

A PADI dive operation is certified by the Los Angeles-based Professional Association of Diving Instructors, the world's largest training agency.

Adventure Scuba Diving
Offering all levels of certification, from open-water through technical diving. Custom dive excursions

are offered on their boat, and they can also charter a boat to fit your needs. They make runs to dive sites from Dania down to Miami. 16701 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, ☎ 305-949-1194.

H2O Scuba
This full-service dive facility offers daily excursions from Miami to Hallandale aboard a custom dive boat, with twice-daily trips on weekends. Night dives are offered Wednesdays and Saturdays. Complete instruction is available from beginner to advanced, including a one-day resort course. Classes are held Monday nights. 160 Sunny Isles Boulevard, Miami Beach, ☎ 305-956-3483 or 888-389-3483.

H2O Scuba offers wreck diving for all levels of expertise.

Island-Hop
The bulk of their business is snorkel trips, but they also take scuba divers down to the stunning reefs of the northern Keys on daily excursions. Snorkel rates include the boat, captain, equipment, two snorkel dives and refreshments. Trips leave from various locations, depending on the destination. PO Box 402412, Miami Beach, 33140, ☎ 305-673-3225.

Mermaid's Dive Center
In addition to local dives, Mermaid's takes divers to the Bahamas, Grand Cayman and Jamaica. The full-service dive facility also boasts its own custom swimming pool for year-round scuba classes, and offers a wide array of equipment. 16604 NE 2nd Avenue, North Miami Beach; ☎ 305-940-0927, www.mermaidsdive.com.

RJ Diving Ventures
A fleet of boats takes divers to South Florida's best wreck and reef sites. Night dives and rental equip-

ment are available. 5352 Pine Tree Drive, Miami Beach; ☎ 305-868-7059.

South Beach Divers
This company offers three reef dives a week in Key Largo and Miami wreck diving the rest of the week. This PADI Five-Star dive center also features an array of classes and certification from beginner to expert, along with a variety of specialties, including underwater photography, Nitrox (enriched air), night dives, wreck dives and several more. 850 Washington Avenue, ☎ 305-531-6110, www.southbeachdivers.com.

Boating

Surrounded by sparkling waters, Miami is a natural boating destination, and there's nothing quite like streaking across the waves of Biscayne Bay under a sun-drenched sky, the city's dramatic panorama spread out before you. There are many ways to take to the waves, from powerboat and yacht charters to personal watercraft rentals and sightseeing and dinner cruises.

TIP

Some boat rental and charter outfits need advance reservations of a month or more. With others, you can step right up and rent a boat. Make sure to call ahead.

Boat Rentals & Charters

Unless otherwise noted, boat rentals, charters and tours are available seven days a week.

Pleasure boat rentals run $200-$300 for a half-day (four hours) and about 50% more for a full day (eight hours). Captained charters run the gamut from $400 for a half-day to $600-$750 for a full day. Captained yacht charters are priciest of all and can run into the thousands. But you'll be pampered with meals, beverages, showers, and water activities like Jet-Skiing and diving. Here are a few options.

Atlantic Yacht Co.
Offering daily, weekly and monthly yacht rentals. Go with a crew or "bareboat." ☎ 305-358-8893, www.charteryachts.net.

Boat Rental International
A variety of boat rentals includes 17-foot speedboats and 30-foot cruisers. Two-hour minimum rental. 24th Street at Collins Avenue; ☎ 305-532-7899.

Charter Yacht *RA*
Charter the spectacular sailing yacht *RA* for half a day, a full day or a sunset-moonlight cruise on Biscayne Bay. Extended cruises to the Florida Keys or the Bahamas also available. Docked at Dinner Key Marina, 3600 Pan American Drive, Coconut Grove, ☎ 305-854-7341.

Club Nautico
Zip across the ocean or bay in 21-foot powerboats, sport and ski boats, or cabin cruisers, available for half- and full-day rentals. Club Nautico has three locations in the Miami area: 2560 South Bayshore Drive, Coconut Grove, ☎ 305-858-6258; Crandon Park Marina, 4000 Crandon Boulevard, Key Bis-

cayne, ☎ 305-361-9217 or 305-361-1281; and 300 Alton Road, Miami Beach, ☎ 305-673-2502.

Deco Drive Rentals
Hourly and daily rentals are available for personal watercraft and specialty speed boats. Or take a thrilling cigarette or Scarab boat ride (with captain). 3923 NW 24th Street; ☎ 305-871-7980.

Fantasy Watersports
You can choose from a full range of boats for rent, from 17 to 20-foot boats with seating for eight to 10 people. Jet boats, small sport boats and personal watercraft also available. 100 Sunny Isles Boulevard, Miami Beach; ☎ 305-940-2628, www.fantasywatersports.com.

Haulover Marine Center
Twenty-foot deck boats are available for half- or full-day rental. Personal watercraft are also for rent. Located at Haulover Beach Park, 10800 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach; ☎ 305-945-3934 or 305-947-3525.

Key Biscayne Boat Rentals
Twenty-two-foot boats with 150 hp outboard motors, available for half- and full-day rentals, or at a two-hour minimum (weekdays only). 3301 Rickenbacker Causeway, Key Biscayne; ☎ 305-361-7368.

Sailboats of Key Biscayne
Rent 14-foot to 25-foot daysailers by the hour, for a day or overnight. Sailing school provides instruction. Crandon Park Marina, 4000 Crandon Boulevard, Key Biscayne; ☎ 305-361-0328.

Shake-a-Leg Miami
This company helps people with disabilities enjoy a host of activities, including kayaking and sailing. Excursions depart from the Shake-a-Leg dock at Dinner Key Marina in Coconut Grove; a typical charter sail is $80 for four hours and $140 for eight hours. ☎ 305-858-5550, www.shakealegmiami.org.

Water Fantaseas
Go with a captain or bareboat on luxury sport yachts, motor yachts, power boats, sailing vessels, catamarans and fishing boats. Custom charters, sunset cruises, sightseeing cruises and term charters are all available. ☎ 305-933-4299, www.waterfantaseas.com.

BOATING SAFETY

If you're chartering a boat and going out on your own, please observe the following boating safety tips from the US Coast Guard:

- Florida does not set a minimum age for operating a vessel, but an adult must be present if the operator is under 18.
- The minimum age to operate a personal watercraft is 14.
- Use life jackets. The Coast Guard requires that a life jacket be available for each passenger; in Florida, they must be worn at all times by children under six and by anyone operating a personal watercraft.
- Don't overload your boat; balance the load from side to side.

- Keep passengers seated (don't stand up in a small boat).
- Don't anchor by the stern; it could capsize the boat. Secure the anchor line to the bow.
- File a "float plan" with friends or the dockmaster so that someone knows where you are.
- Boat propellers can inflict serious injury. Remember to shut your engine off when approaching swimmers or divers. If your party stops to dive or snorkel, make sure everyone is aboard before starting the engine.
- Watch the weather. Weather changes generally come from the west, so look for cloud build-up in that direction. If you get caught in a storm, reduce speed, but keep enough power to maintain headway. Put on your life jackets. Turn on your running lights and head for the nearest shore, with the bow heading into the waves at about a 45° angle. Keep passengers seated on the floor near the center. Anchor the boat if necessary.
- Don't try to navigate a boat while intoxicated; in Florida it is illegal, and you may be subject to arrest.

Small Craft Rentals

In general, you can expect to pay between $50 and $75 per hour to rent a Jet Ski or WaveRunner.

Sun Hydro-Bike Rentals
Despite their name, hydro-bikes don't have wheels but are more like pontoons with pedals. The fee is $10 per hour. Located at Cape Florida, 1200 Crandon Boulevard, Key Biscayne, ☎ 305-365-0309.

Key Biscayne Boat Rentals
Renting Yamaha Super Jets and Yamaha WaveRunners. 3501 Rickenbacker Causeway, Key Biscayne, ☎ 305-361-7368.

Urban Trail Kayak Rentals
Kayak rentals for any span of time from one hour to a full day, with rates from $8 per hour, $20 up to four hours, and $25 for more than four hours. Urban Trail is located at Haulover Beach Park, 10800 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, ☎ 305-947-1302.

Dinner Cruises & Tours

Island Queen Cruises
See where the rich and famous live on a 1½-hour sightseeing tour aboard an Island Queen cruise boat. The tour departs daily from Bayside Marketplace in Downtown Miami and sails through the Port of Miami on its way to the star-studded islands of Biscayne Bay, where you'll see the homes of Oprah Winfrey (Fisher Island), Gloria Estefan (Star Island), Al Capone (Palm Island) and many more. Available on board are a full cash bar, soft drinks, ice cream, snacks, cameras, film and postcards. Tours are conducted all year long, and depart every hour on the hour starting at 11 am. Reservations are required for groups of 20 or more; rates are $14 for adults and $7 for children 12 and under. 401 Biscayne Boulevard, ☎ 305-379-5119, www.islandqueencruises.com.

Island Queen also offers speed boat rides aboard the Bayside Blaster *as well as nightly disco cruises.*

Jungle Queen Riverboat Dinner & Sightseeing Cruises

Jungle Queen excursions include a sightseeing tour that stops at an authentic Seminole Indian village.

Based out of Fort Lauderdale, Jungle Queen has been hosting sightseeing cruises filled with fun, feasting and frivolity for more than 50 years. Passengers sail aboard an authentic riverboat up the New River and disembark at a private island for an all-you-can-eat banquet of barbecued ribs, chicken and shrimp. Following dinner is a variety revue and sing-along. Dinner cruises are conducted year-round, and depart at 7 pm from the Bahia Mar docks, 801 Sea Breeze Boulevard (A1A), Fort Lauderdale. The cost is $29.95 (plus tax) for the dinner cruise, and $11.50 (plus tax) for the sightseeing cruise; cash only (credit cards are not accepted). Reservations are required. ☎ 305-947-6597, www.junglequeen.com.

Schooner *Heritage*

Two-hour sails aboard a majestic tall ship traverse Biscayne Bay from the Miami River to Coconut Grove and Key Biscayne. One-hour moonlight cruises are also offered. Soft drinks and snacks are sold on board, or you may bring your own beverages. The cost is $15 per person for the two-hour sail. Departure times vary seasonally, and it is recommended that you call ahead, as the *Heritage* is frequently booked for private charters. Sailing from Bayside Marketplace, 401 Biscayne Boulevard, Downtown Miami; ☎ 305-442-9697.

Party & Casino Boats

Casino Princesa

This 200-foot mega-yacht offers casino cruises featuring a variety of slots, blackjack, craps, roulette, baccarat and Caribbean stud poker. Great food and entertainment are also provided. The *Casino Princesa* sails twice daily, 12:30 pm and 7:30 pm, from

the dock near the Hard Rock Café at Bayside, 401 Biscayne Boulevard; ☎ 305-379-LUCK. Make a reservation or be there an hour before sail time.

Floribbean Hospitality
The *Celebration* and *Holiday of Magic* dinner party yachts offer daily Bay Escapes sightseeing cruises, and Bay Party nighttime cruises. Sailing from Bayside Marketplace, 401 Biscayne Boulevard, and Dinner Key Marina (private parties only), 3600 Pan American Drive. Call for schedule; ☎ 305-445-8456.

Party Line Cruise Co.
At press time, Party Line was scheduled to start service in the spring of 2001, sailing from the Port of Miami to Key West, disembarking for an hour and a half, then returning. The five-hour trip will include food, drink and some gaming. Call to confirm operations and schedule; ☎ 305-381-6360.

SunCruz Casino
Sailing out of Hollywood, SunCruz Casino features three decks of Las Vegas-style gaming with games ranging from blackjack and roulette to craps and poker as well as slots. Guests also enjoy live entertainment and dancing on all cruises, free drinks while gaming, theater wall TV, and a complimentary boarding beverage. A buffet and à la carte menu are available. SunCruz departs twice daily from Martha's Restaurant on the Intracoastal Waterway, at 6024 North Ocean Drive (A1A), just north of Sheridan Street; ☎ 954-929-3800 or 800-474-3423.

TIP

For information on Everglades airboat tours, see *Attractions*, page 103.

Fishing

The waters in and around Greater Miami and the Beaches provide ample fishing opportunities for the avid angler. Within thousands of acres of shallow water flats, channels, mangroves, keys and creeks, you'll find abundant bonefish, tarpon, permit, sea trout, mangrove snapper, snook and redfish. Offshore waters teem with sailfish, wahoo, blackfin tuna, kingfish, and dolphin, while bass, bluegill, and peacock bass swim in freshwater lakes throughout the county.You can charter a boat including the captain, first mate, bait and tackle, and (sometimes) refreshments for $350-$500 for a half-day or $700-$800 for a full day. Per-person rates for a half-day trip are $80-$85.

Following is a sampling of fishing charters offered in the Miami area. Unless noted otherwise, all operate daily and require advance reservations.

FISHING TIPS

- Expect to bring your own food and beverages aboard. Most charters provide ice to keep things cool.
- Pack a hat, sunglasses, sunscreen and, if necessary, seasick medication.

- Charter boat prices generally include bait and tackle, captain's services, and fishing license.
- If you're renting a boat and going out on your own, you'll need a fishing license. Apply over the phone with Florida Sports Licensing; ☎ 888-347-4356, www.bass-pro.com. VISA, Discover and MasterCard are accepted.

Charters

***Blue Waters* Charter Boat**
Enjoy big game fishing in the comfort of a 50-foot, air-conditioned Hatteras. Full- and half-day deep-sea and Intracoastal excursions are offered. All tackle is provided. Bring your own food and drink, or they'll provide it at an extra coast. Haulover Marina, 10800 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, ☎ 305-207-5128.

Captain Adam Redford
Join Captain Redford for light tackle and fly fishing adventures through the flats and mangrove backcountry of the Everglades or in the channels around Miami and the Keys. Full-day, half-day and night trips go for tarpon, snook, bonefish, permit, redfish, peacock bass and other species. Boats are located at both Everglades National Park and Black Point Marina. ☎ 305-255-7618 or 800-632-0394; www.capt-adamredford.com.

Captain Mark the Shark
Go for the big ones with Captain Mark aboard the 46-foot Hatteras boat *Striker 1*. Full days, half-days or night charters available. Biscayne Bay Marriott

Marina, 1633 N. Bayshore Drive; ☎ 305-759-JAWS, www.marktheshark.com.

Helen C
Half- and full-day deep-sea excursions to fish for barracuda, shark, dolphin, tuna, wahoo and kingfish. The 56-foot *Helen C* is air conditioned and offers a cooler and ice to chill what you bring to eat and drink. Private charters are available. Haulover Marina, 10800 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, ☎ 305-947-4081.

Kelley Fishing Fleet
Kelley's fleet includes three boats that take three deep-sea trips daily, including a night trip departing at 8 pm. Bait and tackle included. Bring food and beverages, or you may purchase something at their small market. Haulover Marina, 10800 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, ☎ 305-945-3801.

Mondo Cane
Fishing excursions for one to six people aboard a 56-foot custom sport fisherman. Full and half days or split parties. They will pick you up at your hotel. Haulover Marina, 10800 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach; ☎ 305-949-3418.

Reel Time Sport Fishing
Sail aboard a 40-foot sport fisherman that can accommodate up to six people on half- or full-day fishing trip. Excursions to the Keys or Bahamas require a two-day minimum booking. Bring your own grub, or it is available for an additional charge. The charter fee is $450 for a half-day or $700 for a full day. Monty Trainer's Marina, 2560 South Bayshore Drive, Coconut Grove; ☎ 305-856-5605.

Reward Fleet
Three trips daily aboard a 70-foot boat featuring a full galley and restrooms. Bait, tackle and snacks provided. Bring your own lunch. Miami Beach Marina, 300 Alton Road, Dock A; ☎ 305-372-9470, www.fishingmiami.com.

Therapy
Go for sailfish, marlin and shark aboard an air-conditioned, 58-foot sport fisherman. Full- and half-day excursions offered for one to six people. They will also arrange lunch. Haulover Marina, 10800 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, ☎ 305-945-1578.

Party Boats

If you don't mind joining a larger group, party boats charge between $25 and $30 for a half-day and from $34-$40 for a full day. Rods are about $5 additional. Both **Kelley Fishing Fleet** and **Reward Fleet** (listed under *Charters*, above) operate party boats; call for more information .

Fishing Spots

In addition to fishing charters, Miami's park system offers some top freshwater and saltwater fishing locations. Unless noted otherwise, all are open daily.

Freshwater Fishing

AMELIA EARHART PARK
401 E. 65th Street, Hialeah
☎ 305-769-2693

Fish for largemouth bass in either of two lakes.

LARRY AND PENNY THOMPSON PARK
11451 SW 184th Street, Miami (South Miami-Dade County)
☎ 305-255-8257

Catch bass in the park's freshwater lake. The lake is open in season only; call to confirm availablity.

MILTON E. THOMPSON PARK & CAMPGROUND
16665 NW 177th Avenue, Miami (North Miami-Dade County)
☎ 305-821-5122

Fish for bass, oscars, bluegill and mudfish in one of three lakes.

TROPICAL PARK
7900 SW 40th Street (Bird Road), Miami
☎ 305-226-0796

Catch largemouth bass, bluegill and catfish in the park's Urban Lake on the north side of the park.

Saltwater Fishing

BLACK POINT PARK AND MARINA
24775 SW 87th Avenue, Homestead
☎ 305-258-4092

Fish by the long channel leading out to the bay for redfish, snapper, and snook.

CRANDON PARK AND MARINA
4000 Crandon Boulevard, Key Biscayne
☎ 305-361-1281

Take a fun-filled trip and charter a sport fishing boat for a half- or full-day around Biscayne Bay, the ocean, or to the Bahamas.

EAST GREYNOLDS PARK
17530 Biscayne Boulevard, N. Miami Beach
☎ 305-945-3425

Here, the park's lake feeds into the nearby Oleta River, where you can fish for mullet, grunt and crabs.

HAULOVER PARK AND MARINA
10800 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach
☎ 305-947-3525

Try your luck at tarpon, snook, snapper, or jack along the jetty and the cut leading from Biscayne Bay to the ocean and on the west side of the park near the picnic area, or charter a drift fishing boat for a half- or full-day of fishing.

HOMESTEAD BAYFRONT PARK & MARINA
9698 SW North Canal Drive, Homestead
☎ 305-230-3033

Fishing in designated areas and along the canal and bay areas for barracuda, snapper, mullet and sea bass.

MATHESON HAMMOCK PARK & MARINA
9610 SW Old Cutler Road
☎ 305-665-5475

You can fish for snapper, mullet and snook under the bridge, past the toll gate on the right side of the park.

– Information provided by Miami-Dade Parks, ☎ 305-755-7800, www.co.miami-dade.fl.us/parks

Golf

Greater Miami is home to more than 30 public and private golf courses. Most are open daily from sunrise to sunset, weather permitting. Call for tee times.

THE BILTMORE GOLF COURSE
1200 Anastasia Avenue, Coral Gables
☎ 305-460-5366

This 18-hole, par 71 championship golf course designed by Donald Ross in 1925 is adjacent to the historic Biltmore hotel.

BRIAR BAY GOLF COURSE
9375 SW 134 Street, Miami (South Miami-Dade)
☎ 305-235-6667

A par 31 executive course encompassing 30 acres.

CALIFORNIA CLUB
20898 San Simeon Way, Miami (North Miami-Dade)
☎ 305-651-3590

An 18-hole, par 72 course offering a challenging front nine and three tough finishing holes.

COUNTRY CLUB OF MIAMI
6801 NW 186 Street, Miami (North Miami-Dade)
☎ 305-829-8449

The club has two beautifully manicured golf courses, each with lush fairways, swift rolling greens and picturesque golf holes. Both feature layouts by Robert Trent Jones.

CRANDON PARK GOLF COURSE
6700 Crandon Boulevard, Key Biscayne
☎ 305-361-9120

This is a championship 18-hole golf course overlooking the bay on Key Biscayne, 10 minutes from downtown Miami.

DON SHULA'S GOLF CLUB
7601 Miami Lakes Drive, Miami Lakes
☎ 305-820-8106

Don Shula's par 3 executive course is open until 11 pm.

Don Shula's par 72 championship course features the natural look of the Everglades, and their par 3 executive course is fun and relaxing. A practice area is also available.

DORAL GOLF RESORT & SPA
4400 NW 87 Avenue, Miami
☎ 305-592-2000

Doral's Great White Course is the only "desert-scape" golf course of its kind in the Southeastern US.

South Florida's premier golf facility, located near the airport, has five courses, including the 148-acre Great White Course designed by Greg Norman, and the famed Blue Monster course, home of annual Doral Open.

GREYNOLDS GOLF COURSE
17530 W Dixie Highway, North Miami Beach
☎ 305-949-1741

This nine-hole, par 36 course in North Miami Beach provides a 3,100-yard challenging layout and features electric carts, reasonable greens fees, club rentals, a snack bar and clubhouse.

HAULOVER GOLF COURSE
10800 Collins Avenue, Sunny Isles Beach
☎ 305-940-6719

Located on the bay at the north end of Miami Beach, Haulover is a nine-hole, 810-yard, par 27 course. Rentals are available.

MIAMI SHORES COUNTRY CLUB
10000 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami Shores
☎ 305-795-2366

The Miami Shores Country Club features a classic 18-hole championship layout built in 1936 by architect Red Laurence. The Club has hosted a number of prestigious events, including the Florida State Open.

NORMANDY SHORES GOLF COURSE
2401 Biarritz Drive, Miami Beach
☎ 305-868-6502

A par 71, regulation course whose 6,400-yard length and gentle hills make it ideal for seniors.

PALMETTO GOLF COURSE
9300 SW 152 Street, Miami (South Miami-Dade)
☎ 305-238-2922

Covering 121 acres parallel to US-1, south of 152nd Street, Palmetto is an 18-hole, par 70 championship course.

Tennis

In addition to resort tennis courts that are open to the public, the cities of Miami and Miami Beach along with Miami-Dade Parks, operate more than 250 courts to serve every corner of Greater Miami.

Following are just a few of the many choices. All are open daily, but call first to check on availability.

BILTMORE TENNIS CENTER
1200 Anastasia Avenue, Coral Gables
☎ 305-460-5360

Located at the Biltmore Hotel, the tennis center offers 10 Har-tru courts lit for night play. Instruction and racquet rentals are available.

CRANDON PARK TENNIS CENTER
7300 Crandon Boulevard, Key Biscayne
☎ 305-365-2300

The Crandon Park Tennis Center hosts the Ericsson Open (formerly the Lipton Championships) each spring in its state-of-the-art stadium.

Located on Key Biscayne, Crandon is one of the leading public tennis centers in the country. Facilities include 17 Laykold cushioned hard courts, six lighted for evening play; eight state-of-the-art clay courts, four with red European clay and four with green American clay; and two grass courts. Steps away are Crandon Park Beach and the Crandon Park Golf Course.

FLAMINGO TENNIS CENTER
1000 12th Street, Miami Beach
☎ 305-673-7761

This popular tennis center on Miami Beach has 20 clay courts.

HAULOVER BEACH TENNIS CENTER
10800 Collins Avenue, Sunny Isles Beach
☎ 305-940-6719

Adjacent to the Haulover marina and golf course, Haulover has six non-lighted tennis courts.

NORTH SHORE TENNIS CENTER
350 73rd Street, Miami Beach
☎ 305-993-2022

This Miami Beach facility has six clay and five hard courts.

SANS SOUCI TENNIS COURTS
1795 Sans Souci Boulevard, North Miami
☎ 305-893-7130

Located in North Miami, Sans Souci offers 12 courts lighted for night play.

SURFSIDE TENNIS CENTER
8750 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach
☎ 305-866-5176

Three lighted tennis courts are available for play day or night. Located on the north side of Miami Beach.

TROPICAL PARK
7900 SW 40th Street (Bird Road), Miami
☎ 305-553-3161

Situated in southwest Miami off Bird Road, Tropical Park offers 12 hard courts, lighted for night play.

TIP

For more information on the court nearest you, call the recreation departments of Miami-Dade Parks (☎ 305-755-7800); Miami (☎ 305-416-1308); and Miami Beach (☎ 305-673-7730).

Spas

If your idea of working your muscles is a vigorous massage, a day at the spa is probably for you. Miami's spas know how to pamper, refresh and rejuvenate with the latest and greatest equipment, expert fitness training and luxurious body treatments.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

Most Miami spas offer day packages that usually include lunch and a number of treatments, plus use of exercise equipment.

Eden Roc Resort & Spa
Floor-to-ceiling windows overlook the ocean at Spa of Eden's glass-enclosed weight complex, which also boasts the latest computerized equipment. A full array of massage therapies and body treatments, along with such wet therapies as steam rooms, saunas and Swiss showers are also offered. Open daily. 4525 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach; ☎ 305-531-0000 or 800-327-8337, www.edenrocresort.com.

Fontainebleau Hilton Spa
This full-service fitness center and spa features a state-of-the-art cardiovascular center, a host of fitness classes including spinning and box aerobics, and outdoor fitness classes like beachside yoga, sunrise power walks and aqua kickboxing. A variety of specialized services include body treatments, personal training sessions and private fitness evaluations. Open daily. 4441 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach; ☎ 305-538-6280, www.hilton.com.

Pritikin Longevity Center & Spa
A long-term healthy lifestyle is the goal at the Pritikin Center, where guests participate for one- , two- or three weeks in a program that includes nutrition workshops, exercise, lifestyle and stress management and medical supervision. With its location at the Yacht Club at Turnberry Isle, Pritikin guests also enjoy such resort amenities as golf, tennis and a private beach. 19735 Turnberry Way, Aventura; ☎ 305-935-7131 or 800-327-4914, www.pritikinfl.com.

Sonesta Beach Resort
Sonesta's Spa & Fitness Center offers a variety of skin care and body treatments, including thermal facials, seaweed body masks and body polishes. Beach massages, reflexology, assisted stretching and a daily schedule of fitness classes and muscular strength training are also featured. Guest day passes are available. ☎ 305-361-2021 or 800-SONESTA, www.sonesta.com.

The Spa at Doral
The 168,000-square-foot European-style Spa at Doral offers indoor and outdoor heated pools, hydro-cascades, fitness studios, a cardio-weight training room, indoor running track, steam and sauna rooms, Jacuzzis and cold plunge pools. Individual services include massage and body treatments, facial skin care and lifestyle enhancement counseling. A salon for men and women offers everything from hair and scalp treatments to make-up and waxing services. Open daily, 8 am-7 pm; 4400 NW 87th Avenue; ☎ 305-593-6030 or 800-331-7768, www.doralgolf.com.

The Spa at Doral offers 15 fitness classes a day, including stretching and strengthening, dance, yoga and kickboxing.

Spectator Sports

With professional teams representing the NFL, NBA, WNBA, MLB and NHL, as well as a host of minor-league teams, major golf and tennis tournaments, and exciting parimutuels, there's always a sport in season no matter when you visit Miami.

Major League Teams

Florida Marlins
The Marlins stunned baseball fans, and Miami, when they won the 1997 World Series just four years after they started playing. Although that championship roster has been dismantled, the Marlins still boast an impressive pedigree and a winning spirit. The season runs from April to September. Games are held at **Pro Player Stadium**, 2267 Dan Marino Boulevard (formerly NW 199th Street); ☎ 305-626-7400 or 305-350-5050 (tickets), www.flamarlins.com.

The American Airlines Arena has been called one of the country's loveliest sports venues, thanks to skyline and bay views from all concourses, public terraces and balconies.

Miami Heat
Now playing downtown at the new, 20,000-seat **American Airlines Arena**, the Miami Heat formed during the 1988-89 season as part of a two-phase league expansion that also included the Orlando Magic, the Minnesota Timberwolves and the Charlotte Hornets. Under coach Pat Riley, they've made it to the playoffs every year since 1995. Season runs October-April, longer for playoff games. 601 Biscayne Boulevard; ☎ 786-777-1000, www.heat.com.

Florida Panthers
Though they recently moved from the Miami Arena to the **National Car Rental Center in Sunrise,** the Florida Panthers remain a popular team among Miamians, who remember the excitement of watching them in the Stanley Cup finals in 1996. The stadium is at One Panther Parkway, Sunrise; ☎ 954-835-7000, www.floridapanthers.com.

Miami Dolphins
New head coach Dave Wannstedt has taken over this veteran NFL-AFC East team, memorable for its perfect 1972 season and Superbowl VII win. Play is held at Pro Player Stadium, host of Super Bowls XXIII, XXIX and XXXIII. Tickets are available through the box office or Ticketmaster (☎ 888-559-8999). Season runs August-December. Pro Player Stadium is located at 2269 Dan Marino Boulevard (formerly NW 199th Street); ☎ 954-452-7000 (Dolphins' main number), or 888-346-7849 (FINSTIX), www.miamidolphins.com.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

Mariners, Marauders, Mustangs, Missiles, Moons, Sharks and Suns were all considered as names for the new football franchise in 1965, before "Dolphins" was chosen.

Miami Fusion
Miami's entry into MLS (Major League Soccer) plays through the spring and summer at **Lockhart Stadium** in Fort Lauderdale. West Commercial Boulevard & NW 12th Avenue; ☎ 888-FUSION4.

Miami Sol
Kicking off in June of 2000, Miami's first women's professional basketball team has generated lots of excitement among fans of both genders. Season runs May-September. Play is at the **American Airlines Arena**, 601 Biscayne Boulevard; ☎ 786-777-4SOL, 786-777-4328 (tickets), www.wnba.com/sol.

College Teams

UM's baseball team won the national championship in 1982, 1985 and 1999. The football team captured the national title in 1983, 1987, 1989 and 1991.

University of Miami Hurricanes
Go 'Canes! The Hurricanes' football season runs August-November at **Orange Bowl Stadium**, 1400 NW 4th Street. Hurricane men's basketball runs November-March at the **Miami Arena**, 701 Arena Boulevard. The Hurricanes' baseball season is February-May, with home games at **Mark Light Baseball Stadium** on UM's Coral Gables campus. For tickets, ☎ 305-284-2263 or 800-GO-CANES, www.hurricanesports.com.

Major Tournaments

Ericsson Open
Top international tennis players, including Men's Singles champion Pete Sampras and Women's Singles champion Martina Hingis, descend on the **Crandon Park Tennis Center** each spring, competing for millions in prize money. 7300 Crandon Boulevard, Key Biscayne; ☎ 305-446-2200 or 305-442-3367 (tickets), www.ericsson-open.com.

FedEx Orange Bowl
Two of the nation's top college teams match up every January at the **Orange Bowl Stadium**, 1145 NW 11th Street; ☎ 305-371-4600.

PGA TOUR Event Golf Tournament in Miami
Formerly the Doral/Ryder Open, this kick-off event to the PGA tour is held each year in late February or early March on the famed Blue Monster course at the **Doral Golf Resort and Spa**, 4400 NW 87th Avenue; ☎ 305-477-4653.

Auto Racing

Homestead-Miami Speedway is a premier motorsports facility, hosting a variety of racing events throughout the year, including NASCAR, Indy Car, and Formula One races. Call for schedules. The Speedway is at SW 137th Avenue and 336th Street, Homestead; ☎ 305-230-RACE (7223); www.homesteadmiamispeedway.com.

Parimutuels & Gaming

Calder Race Course,
Calder, located next to Pro Player Stadium at the Broward-Dade County line, hosts a season of thoroughbred horse racing from May-November. The season includes "The Festival of the Sun," called the richest day in Florida racing and featuring a horse fair and kids' sports village. Another meet, "Tropical at Calder", runs November-January. 21001 NW 27th Avenue, Miami; ☎ 305-625-1311, www.calderracecourse.com.

Flagler Greyhound Track
Greyhounds race nightly from June through November, with matinees Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. 401 NW 38th Court, Miami; ☎ 305-649-3000.

Gulfstream Park
Located just north of Greater Miami, Gulfstream is the home of the Florida Derby, and features thoroughbred racing from January through mid-March. 901 South Federal Highway; ☎ 954-454-7000, www.gulfstreampark.com.

Hialeah Park & Race Course
Completing its 75th anniversary season in 2000, Hialeah ran its 58-day race meeting at Gulfstream Park in Hallandale for the first time, as an alternate location. Call for the current schedule and location; 2200 East 4th Avenue; ☎ 305-885-8000, www.hialeahpark.com.

Miami Jai-Alai
The world's fastest game can be enjoyed year-round at this historic fronton. Open daily except Tuesdays, with night games Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays; 3500 NW 37th Avenue, ☎ 305-633-6400, www.fla-gaming.com.

Miccosukee Indian Gaming
Play runs 24 hours a day at this gaming facility just west of Florida's Turnpike. Poker, lightning lotto, high-stakes bingo and video pull-tab machines are part of the fun. 500 SW 177th Avenue, ☎ 305-222-4600.

Shop Till You Drop

From specialty boutiques to outdoor promenades to sprawling malls that are almost cities in themselves, Greater Miami boasts a dizzying array of shopping opportunities. For the visitor, it's not simply a matter of browsing the nearest souvenir shop.

Many shopping areas are set up as entertainment centers as well, with dining, movies, live performances and clubbing in the mix.

If you're on foot, there are places where you can step out of your hotel and stroll to nearby shopping – Downtown Miami, Coral Gables/Miracle Mile area, South Beach, Surfside, Coconut Grove, to name some – but to reach the big malls, you'll have to hop on public transportation, take a taxi or drive.

TIP

Unless noted otherwise, shops and malls are open daily.

Malls

Aventura Mall
This upscale enclave in extreme northeast Miami-Dade County recently doubled in size to 2.3 million square feet of retail space, with 250 specialty shops, and major anchors including Bloomingdale's, Macy's, Lord & Taylor, JCPenney, Sears and Burdines. Shoppers can catch a movie at the 24-screen AMC Theatre – featuring inclined stadium seating – grab a bite at the mall's food court, sip coffee while people-watching at Starbuck's or choose from a variety of restaurants, including The Cheesecake Factory, Johnny Rockets and the landmark Miami Beach deli, Wolfie's. The mall offers a customer service center, coupon books and discount cards, and meet & greet programs. 19501 Biscayne Boulevard, Aventura; ☎ 305-935-1110, www.shopaventuramall.com.

Aventura Mall offers free transportation to and from some downtown and beach hotels.

Bal Harbour Shops

Guards decked out like Bahamian gendarmes are on hand to assist shoppers at Bal Harbour Shops.

What's in a name? Designer merchandise, for one thing, if you're visiting prestigious Bal Harbour Shops, located just over the Broad Causeway from the mainland. Within the open-air mall's garden setting of reflective ponds, waterfalls and fountains, a list of boutiques reads like a Who's Who of fashion history: Chanel, Bvlgari, Cartier, Christian Dior, Escada, Prada, Gianni Versace, Giorgio Armani, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Hérmès, Ermenegildo Zegna. Recent additions include Dolce & Gabbana, Celine – featuring fashions by designer Michael Kors – and Via, exclusive retailers for Gianfranco Ferre.

A host of other shops and boutiques, including Tiffany, Ann Taylor and Bruno Magli, are complemented by the department stores Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue, while restaurants include the Bal Harbour Bistro, Panini Café and the first Petrossian restaurant in the US outside New York. Personal services include the Jacques Dessange salon, Femme Coiffure Salon/Spa, American Express Travel and Au Courant Opticians.

Need a taxi back to the hotel? Just push a button on the wall. 9700 Collins Avenue, Bal Harbour; ☎ 305-866-0311, www.balharbourshops.com.

Bayside Marketplace

Bayside Marketplace offers extended hours at restaurants, eateries, outdoor cafés and bars.

Overlooking scenic Biscayne Bay, Bayside Marketplace is an open-air retail, dining and entertainment center of more than 150 shops, restaurants and bars including the Hard Rock Café. Retailers include the Disney Store, Sharper Image, Warner Bros. Studio Store and The Limited. But what really sets Bayside's shopping experience apart is the Pier 5 collection of colorful pushcarts, selling everything from

jewelry to leather accessories, unique collectibles and incense. Prepare to browse.

Dining options include an international food court, outdoor cafés, Latin steakhouses and seafood restaurants. Tour boats also depart from Bayside, while live entertainment includes street performers and frequent concerts. 401 Biscayne Boulevard; ☎ 305-577-3344, www.baysidemarketplace.com.

CocoWalk

A shopping village within the village of Coconut Grove, CocoWalk hums with nearly constant activity on three levels of shops, restaurants, outdoor cafés and clubs, all surrounding an open-air courtyard dominated by a sweeping stone staircase. There are familiar retailers – Gap, Banana Republic and Victoria's Secret – and shops with a South Florida flair, including Ocean Drive Fashion. At night, the "club crawlers" dominate CocoWalk, giving it a palpable energy as music spills into the street from places like Café Tu Tu Tango, Baja Beach Club and Howl at the Moon Saloon. More sedate diversions await at a number of restaurants, including The Cheesecake Factory, Coco Bistro and the new Los Ranchos steak house, as well as an AMC 16 cinema. At any time, strolling artists, artisans and musicians may offer impromptu performances. 3015 Grand Avenue, Coconut Grove; ☎ 305-444-0777, www. cocowalk.com.

CocoWalk is a popular Grove hangout for shopping, dining and entertainment.

Cutler Ridge Mall

Located about 20 miles south of downtown Miami and close to the Keys, Cutler Ridge Mall offers more than 125 stores, including Burdines, JCPenney, Dillard's, Kmart, Sears and Ross. Shoppers can relax at an international food court and enjoy a Caribbean Carnival featuring a lively "bird revue." 20505

South Dixie Highway, Cutler Ridge; ☎ 305-235-8562.

Dadeland Mall

Dadeland mall boasts the state's largest Burdines department store (631,000 square feet).

Dadeland Mall ushered in Greater Miami's era of mega-malls, and it's still going strong today with 1.4 million square feet of retail space. Major anchors include Burdines, Burdines Home Gallery, JCPenney, Lord & Taylor, Saks Fifth Avenue and the country's largest The Limited and Express. Among 165 specialty stores, visitors will find The Disney Store, the Gap family of stores, Nine West Shoes, Godiva, Ann Taylor and Benetton, along with a food court and The Cheesecake Factory restaurant.

With a convenient location 20 minutes south of downtown Miami and Miami International Airport, the mall offers transportation to and from area hotels, including Miami Dadeland Marriott, the Airport Marriott and Holiday Inn University. It also has its own dedicated Metrorail station. Such accessibility is one thing that's made Dadeland a favorite among Latin American visitors, who account for more than 40% of the mall's gross sales. A multilingual staff mans the customer service center. North Kendall Drive between US-1 and the Palmetto Expressway; ☎ 305-665-6227, www.shopsimon.com.

Dolphin Mall

Dolphin Mall will offer the only 28-screen theater in the state of Florida.

Set to debut in 2001, the new Dolphin Mall bills itself as Miami's largest value retail and entertainment center, offering more than 200 outlet stores, dining options, and entertainment venues. At press time, the names of 100 specialty stores and restaurants have been released, 40% of which are new to Miami-Dade County. Among the new stores are Giorgio's designer outlet; Animal Mania, featuring animal-themed merchandise; Lucky's Athletic, a

new-concept denim superstore; and Chispa de la Vida, an Argentinean fashion retailer premiering its first North American store.

Entertainment won't just be a side dish to shopping here – some might come for the fun alone. There's a custom-designed children's play area in the food court, where parents can relax while the little ones jump and climb. Adults just want to have fun, too, and Dave & Buster's lets them cut loose on a host of toys, including billiards and virtual reality machines. The mall will cater to visitors with a customer service center, multilingual concierge, VIP shopping and discount programs, special tour bus entry, taxi stand, meet & greet and package handling services, and a visitor information center. 11150 NW 17 Street, Miami; ☎ 305-437-9922, www.dolphinmall.com.

The Falls

Open-air walkways and trickling waterfalls provide the picturesque setting for more than 100 retailers at this shopping hub located off US-1 at SW 136 Street, including Bloomingdale's, Macy's, Coach, Banana Republic, Crate & Barrel, J. Crew and the Discovery Channel Store. A 12-screen movie theater provides entertainment, and 13 restaurants and cafés set the table for tasty treats, from sweet – Haagen Däzs, Mrs. Field's Cookies, Sweet Factory – to saucy – Los Ranchos Restaurant, Prezzo Italian Restaurant.

Complimentary carry-out service is available upon request from any store. Have a question or special need? Try the Visitor Information Center (located between the Pottery Barn and Gap). 8888 SW 136 Street, Miami; ☎ 305-255-4570, www.thefallsshoppingcenter.com.

Kendall Town & Country Mall
This mall in southwest Miami includes Sears, Marshalls, Lerner New York, Ross Dress For Less, Linens-n-Things, Pier One Imports, Men's Wearhouse, Lane Bryant, and a Publix supermarket. The food court features a carousel for the kids. 8505 Mills Drive (at Kendall Drive and SW 117th Avenue), Kendall; ☎ 305-274-7982.

Loehmann's Fashion Island
This specialty retail mall is anchored by Loehmann's, the nationwide chain of off-price stores that feature the famous Back Room of designer fashions at discount prices. Fashion-conscious visitors can also browse the International Jewelers Exchange, Dress for Less, Ital Design, Rochester's Big & Tall, S&H Shoes and other shops, along with a collection of home decor and accessory stores, gift shops and a spacious Barnes & Noble bookstore.

After shopping, you can choose from 11 restaurants, lounges, and snack shops, as well as an AMC 16 movie theater. 2855 NE 187 Street, Aventura; ☎ 305-932-0520.

Mall of the Americas
Close to Miami International Airport, Mall of the Americas has an international feel, and visitors will hear lots of Spanish as they browse value retail stores like Marshall's, Ross, T.J. Maxx and Linens-n-Things. Other tenants include World Foot Locker, Old Navy and KB Toys. An international food court boasts La Fogata, offering delicious Nicaraguan specialties, while Cuban favorites are savored at adjacent Casa Larios. Disney tickets and hotel reservations are available through a Westgate Resorts booth. 7795 W Flagler Street, Miami; ☎ 305-261-8772.

Miami International Mall
Anchored by Burdines, Dillard's, JCPenney and Sears, and located just off the Dolphin Expressway at 107th Avenue, Miami International Mall was alone in central west Miami-Dade before the Dolphin Mall planned to open a little farther west. Still, it's a quick drive from the airport and airport hotels and offers 140 specialty stores, including Footlocker, Gap, Old Navy, Frederick's of Hollywood and Bath & Body Works. Dining choices include fast food and snack stands, as well as the sit-down Ruby Tuesday restaurant. Visitor services include cab stand, customer service center and post office. 1455 NW 107 Avenue, Miami; ☎ 305-593-1775.

Prime Outlets at Florida City
Minutes from Homestead and a convenient stopping point to or from the Keys, Prime Outlets lives up to its name, with outlet stores from Levi's, London Fog, Bass, Battaglia, Nine West, Claire's Boutique, Corning Revere, Sunglass Hut and many more. A food court, tourist information center, children's play area and parking for RVs and buses enhance the shopping experience. 250 E. Palm Drive, Florida City; ☎ 305-248-4727.

Sawgrass Mills
Although not located in Greater Miami, this massive outlet mall in western Broward County is a must-stop for visitors to South Florida. More than a mile long, with its own 800-member walking club, the mall boasts more than 300 manufacturer and retail outlet stores, name-brand discounters, specialty stores, pushcarts and kiosks, plus more than 30 eateries, including two huge food courts, a Hard Rock Café and Rainforest Café.

Sharing the massive Sawgrass Mills parking lot are a host of other stores and restaurants as well as a movie theater.

The list of stores is copious: Off 5th – Saks Fifth Avenue Outlet; Last Call! The Clearance Center from Neiman Marcus; JCPenney Outlet Store; Spiegel Outlet Store; Levi's Outlet By Designs; Nine West Outlet... and on and on, all offering merchandise for as much as 80% below retail. The mall's newest section, The Oasis, is an open-air retail/entertainment promenade featuring Ron Jon Surf Shop, Wolfgang Puck Café, Ghirardelli Soda Fountain & Chocolate Shop, The Cheesecake Factory, Legal Sea Foods, Rainforest Café, and a GameWorks fun zone.

Don't be daunted by the mall's distance. Shuttle buses stop at a number of Miami Beach hotels daily except Sundays; cost is $5 per person each way and riders receive a free VIP coupon book. 12801 W Sunrise Boulevard, Sunrise; ☎ 954-846-2300, www.sawgrassmillsmall.com.

Streets of Mayfair

Nightlife at Streets of Mayfair includes Iguana Cantina and Chili Pepper, along with the 24-hour News Café and late-night Improv Comedy Club.

Shopping here is eclectic, with merchandise ranging from the rare French Art Deco furniture and art glass of Valerio Antiques to the handcrafted pottery, glass and enamelware of Hibiscus Hill, or the stone and wood carvings, drums, jewelry and masks found at Out of Africa. Dining is exotic, with choices like the French Bistro La Fontaine and the Japanese Chiyo's.

The open-air, pedestrian-friendly complex is home to 17 shops, a number of restaurants, bars and clubs, the Regal Mayfair 10 Cinemas and the all-suite Mayfair House Hotel. 2911 Grand Avenue, Coconut Grove; ☎ 305-448-1700.

The Shops at Sunset Place

Three levels of shopping, dining and entertainment distinguish this South Miami retail center. Shops

are trendy and fun to browse through, with A/X Armani Exchange, Havana Republic, Pacific Sunwear, NikeTown and the Virgin Megastore among the offerings. Shoppers can take coffee breaks at Barnie's or Xando, but if hunger hits, these restaurants will satisfy: Sweet Donna's Country Store, Restaurant and Bakery, serving down-home, Southern-style favorites like rotisserie chicken and crab cakes; and Wilderness Grill/Paradise Down Under, offering a mix of Aussie cuisine, seafood, steaks and pasta. But the day doesn't end with dinner – there's an AMC 24 cinema and an IMAX theater.

Entertainment at the Shops at Sunset Place also includes a GameWorks arcade of state-of-the-art electronic games.

Visitors arriving by Metrorail can get off at the South Miami Station, where a trolley that stops at the mall runs about every 20 minutes. Valet parking is also available. 5701 Sunset Drive, South Miami, ☎ 305-663-0873.

Shopping Promenades & Districts

Downtown Miami Shopping/Historic District
With Flagler Street as its historic heart, the downtown shopping district is made up of all categories of stores and shops, selling everything from electronics, cameras and sporting goods to shoes, luggage and cosmetics. Major anchors include Burdines, Marshall's, Ross Dress For Less, La Epoca (imported from Havana), The Sports Authority, Victor's and the Seybold Building, which houses more than 280 jewelers. Visitors may want to allot an entire day to stroll the bustling streets with their unique collection of "only in Miami" shops and restaurants. Biscayne Boulevard to Second Avenue West, SE First Street to NE Third Street; ☎ 305-379-7070, www.downtownmiami.net.

South Beach
Offering more than 170 specialty shops and restaurants, the South Beach shopping and entertainment district offers an incredible array of merchandise, including designer clothes and unique art treasures. Put on your walking shoes, because you'll want to stroll down Lincoln Road, once known as the "Fifth Avenue of the South." Today, this seven-block promenade features dozens of upscale shops and restaurants.

Near Lincoln Road are Ocean Drive, Collins Avenue, Española Way and Washington Avenue, where you'll find a mix of designer boutiques and locally owned shops and galleries offering an array of one-of-a-kind collectibles and clothes. Don't miss Excess, En Avance, Fly Boutique, Funkysexy.com, Follies, Palm Produce and BASE Caribbean, all on Lincoln Road.

No matter where your browsing takes you on South Beach, an outdoor café will be waiting where you can relax, refresh and enjoy the people-watching. For more shopping in South Beach, call the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce at ☎ 305-672-1270.

Homestead Main Street
This picturesque historic district offers antiques and collectibles, cafés and restaurants, galleries, and professional and community services. Live entertainment is featured on the first Friday of every month. Krome and Washington avenues, Homestead, ☎ 305-242-4814.

Main Street, Miami Lakes
Designed to resemble a charming street in a small town, Main Street is an open-air shopping and restaurant promenade that also hosts several small fes-

tivals and events each year. Restaurants include Tony Roma's, Shula's Steak 2, and El Novillo, a great Nicaraguan steakhouse. 15255 Bull Run Road, Miami Lakes; ☎ 305-817-4198 (entertainment hotline).

Miracle Mile & Downtown Coral Gables

Like the rest of Coral Gables, Miracle Mile and the downtown shopping district are cast in a Mediterranean setting accented by tree-lined streets, fountains, and archways trimmed in bougainvillea. Here shoppers will find more than 200 moderate to high-end shops, restaurants and cafés, with retail options including men's and women's boutiques, shoe and jewelry stores, and home furnishings. Miracle Mile, in fact, has evolved into something of a bridal headquarters, with no fewer than 20 stores selling gowns and accessories along its half-mile stretch, including Chic Parisien, popular among local brides-to-be as well as brides from all over Latin America.

Some Miracle Mile and Downtown Coral Gables stores are closed on Sundays.

More than 30 restaurants throughout the district offer tremendous variety, from the classic French fare of Le Provençal to the pungent flavors of House of India and the homestyle favorites of the venerable Biscayne Cafeteria. Cafés and coffee houses are plentiful, while jazz bars and pubs – including the authentically Irish JohnMartin's – offer after-hours fun.

Culturally speaking, Miracle Mile/Downtown Coral Gables is the place to prowl. The district is home to the **Actors' Playhouse**, housed in the magnificently restored Miracle Theatre, as well as a number of unique galleries, whose works of art are displayed the first Friday evening of each month during the Coral Gables gallery walk. Books & Books hosts monthly poetry readings as well as regular author

readings. Douglas Road to LeJeune Road and Aragon Avenue to Andalusia Avenue; ☎ 305-569-0311, www.downtowngables.org.

Boutiques & Specialty Stores

Alberto Cortes Cosmetics & Perfumes
This downtown perfumery offers a mix of French makeup, cosmetics, designer fragrances and eyewear, facial care and body treatments. Product lines include Clarins, Coryse Salome, Orlane, and Elizabeth Arden as well as perfumes by Givenchy, Escada, Carolina Herrera, Ralph Lauren, Paco Rabanne, Jean Patou, and more. Closed Sundays. 20 SE 3rd Avenue, downtown Miami; ☎ 305-358-0680.

Bill's Pipe & Tobacco Shop
Everything for the pipe and cigar smoker, including a wide selection of pipes and pipe tobacco, cigars, accessories and gifts. Closed Sundays. 2309 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, Coral Gables, ☎ 305-444-1764 or 800-664-1764, www.billspipeandtobacco.com. Under the same ownership, **King's Treasure Tobacco** is open daily at Bayside Marketplace, 401 Biscayne Boulevard in downtown Miami; ☎ 305-374-5593 or 800-258-5593, www.kingstreasuretobacco.com.

Books & Books
Readers are welcome. Books & Books encourages browsing and thumbing through its massive collection of volumes. The shop also features poetry readings the last Friday of every month as well as regular author readings. Past guests have included Jimmy Carter, Leonard Pitts, Ernest Gaines, Dave Barry, Carl Hiaasen, Tom Wolfe, Isabel Allende, Edna Buchanan, Kurt Vonnegut and Annie Liebowitz. Books

& Books owner Mitchell Kaplan is a local celebrity, having founded the Miami Book Fair. 296 Aragon Avenue, Coral Gables, ☎ 305-442-4408. There's another Books & Books on South Beach at 933 Lincoln Road; ☎ 305-532-3222.

Counter Spy Shop
If you're a budding James Bond or just want to protect yourself, you'll love the cool merchandise at Counter Spy Shop, offering more than 300 high-tech security and surveillance products, including night vision goggles, tiny listening devices, "truth" phones, and recorders that pick up conversations from 30 feet away. Open weekdays; by appointment only on weekends. 600 Brickell Avenue, Suite 600, downtown; ☎ 305-358-4336, www.spyzone.com.

Deco Denim
Specializing in denim fashions by Levis, Lee, Calvin Klein, Guess, Dockers, DKNY, Polo and Tommy Hilfiger. 1301 Washington Avenue, South Beach; ☎ 305-534-9397. Another Deco Denim store in South Beach is at 645 Collins Avenue, ☎ 305-532-6986, with a third location in Sunny Isles, 17700 Collins Avenue; ☎ 305-932-3389.

DSW Shoe Warehouse
An enormous selection of designer and name-brand shoes at 20-50% off department store prices. DSW Shoe Warehouse is in Kendall at 8607 South Dixie Highway (Kendall 1 Plaza), ☎ 305-740-0975, www.dswshoe.com. Another DSW Shoe Warehouse is located at 19135 Biscayne Boulevard in Aventura; ☎ 305-932-1991.

Gray & Sons Jewelers
Specializing in fine new and pre-owned watches and estate jewelry, with more than 35 brands to choose from. 9595 Harding Avenue, Surfside; ☎ 305-865-0999, www.grayandsons.com.

J. Bolado Clothiers
Featuring top-quality, imported and domestic men's fashions. Also offering made-to-measure clothing and shirts. Closed Sundays. 336 Miracle Mile, Coral Gables; ☎ 305-448-2507.

Kenneth Cole
A leader in fashion footwear for men and women, Kenneth Cole offers an innovative collection of quality footwear, handbags, small leather goods and accessories. 190 8th Street, South Beach; ☎ 305-673-5151. Another Kenneth Cole is in Dadeland Mall, 7535 N. Kendall Drive; ☎ 305-668-1789.

Le Chocolatier
Watch through a glass partition as chocolate is made at Le Chocolatier.

Le Chocolatier's chocolate creations are tasteful to the eye as well as the palate. Hand-dipped and molded confections are used in gift baskets, and with balloons, greeting cards and wine. H2Eau is Le Chocolatier's new line of tropical chocolates; luscious biscotti is available in classic, triple nut or chocolate chip. Open weekdays, Sundays by appointment. 1840 NE 164th Street, North Miami Beach; ☎ 305-944-3020 or 888-532-4626, www.lechocolatier.com.

MARS
It's the "musician's planet," packed with all kinds of equipment, including guitars, keyboards, drums, amplifiers and pro audio gear. A keyboard room, deejay demo room and drum/percussion room let you get

creative without disturbing the other customers. 12115 Biscayne Boulevard, North Miami; ☎ 305-893-0191.

Miami Golf Discount Superstore
With 10,000 square feet of golf equipment, it's a golfer's paradise. Located in the heart of downtown Miami, Miami Golf is stocked with clubs, balls and other equipment, and offers a separate shoe room and clothing boutique as well. There's also a practice net if you want to test a club or two. 111 NE 1st Street (2nd Floor); ☎ 305-371-4554 or 800-718-8006, www.miamigolfdiscount.com.

Morays Jewelers
A fine downtown jeweler for more than 50 years, Morays is an authorized dealer for more than 30 high-quality Swiss watch brands. They also sell an array of choice jewelry and gifts. 50 NE 2nd Avenue, ☎ 305-374-0739.

Flea Markets

The Opa-Locka/Hialeah Flea Market
Browse the stalls of more than 1,200 wholesale and retail vendors at one of South Florida's largest flea markets. Relax at an on-site restaurant after shopping. 12705 NW 42nd Avenue, ☎ 305-688-8080.

Attractions

Palm trees swaying in the balmy breeze from the ocean, sparkling blue surf, elegant beachfront resorts, and a dazzling neon-lit nightlife – this is the image of Miami that draws millions to this tourist

mecca. And to entice these varied visitors, Miami offers a galaxy of thrilling attractions where the tropical color and unique landscape of South Florida add drama and delight to the vacation experience.

Unless noted otherwise, all attractions are open daily. Please note that entrance fees listed are subject to change.

On the Wild Side

AUDUBON HOUSE
5530 Sunset Drive
South Miami
☎ 305-666-5111
Free (donations welcome)

A three-acre botanical garden and collection of rare and endangered tropical trees surrounds the home of South Miami pioneer Arden "Doc" Thomas. Now the headquarters of the Tropical Audubon Society, visitors are welcome Mondays-Thursdays or by appointment.

BISCAYNE NATIONAL PARK
9700 SW 328 Street
Homestead area
☎ 305-230-7275
www.nps.gov/bisc
No entrance fee to park; see below for fees charged for boat tours, snorkeling and diving.

Biscayne National Park is nine miles east of Homestead.

One of the few aquatic national parks, Biscayne preserves and protects delicate underwater coral communities of colorful fish and marine plants, as well as providing a bird sanctuary on the tropical islets scattered around the bay. The stunning scenery of this undersea world may be viewed through a glass-bottom boat, or more directly during scuba diving or

snorkeling excursions taken aboard the park's 45-foot catamaran. The snorkeling fee of $29.95 per person includes mask, snorkel, fins, snorkeling vest and instruction; the diving fee is $44.95. To rent full scuba gear, including two tanks, is an additional $37. Glass-bottom boat tours are $19.95 for adults, $12.95 for children under 12; canoe rentals, picnic areas, and walking trails are available, as are camping facilities and fine fishing areas. A waterfront visitor center offers exhibits and information on the wild residents of these teeming tropical waters and tangled jungle keys.

COOPERTOWN AIRBOATS
22700 SW 8th Street
Everglades
☎ 305-226-6048
www.coopertownairboats.com
Fee: adults, $12; ages seven-11, $8

The emphasis is on exploration, as professional guides sweep across the sawgrass in airboats, visiting gator holes and the island homes of birds, turtles and raccoons, all the "critters" who call this place "home." Equally "down home" are the tasty Everglades-style meals served in their restaurant.

Coopertown was founded by John Cooper in 1945 and has been home to the Cooper family ever since.

EVERGLADES ALLIGATOR FARM
40351 SW 192 Avenue
☎ 305-247-2628
www.everglades.com
Admission: adults, $14.50; ages four-10, $8

Live animal shows every hour feature alligators and snakes, and a thrilling airboat tour through the Everglades brings visitors an up-close view of these impressive reptiles. The farm is home to more than 2,400 alligators as well as other reptiles and snakes.

EVERGLADES SAFARI PARK
26700 SW 8th Street
☎ 305-226-6923
www.evergladessafaripark.com
Admission: adults, $15; ages five-11, $5

Everglades Safari Park features a crocodile exhibit housing various species from around the world.

Take a thrilling guided airboat ride and wander through dense foliage past dozens of alligators along a jungle trail. It's all part of the wild experience at Everglades Safari Park. In addition, you'll enjoy an alligator and wildlife show and a farm that is home to more than 500 American alligators.

EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK
40001 State Road 9336
☎ 305-242-7700
www.nps.gov/ever
Admission: $10 per car, $5 per pedestrian or cyclist

The third-largest national park in the Continental US protects and presents to visitors the alluring world of the Everglades, a unique and fascinating community of plants and animals living only in the pinelands and wetlands of South Florida. Everglades National Park encompasses more than 1.5 million acres of sawgrass prairies, hardwood hammocks, pinelands, mangrove forests and open waterways. But as conservationist and author Marjory Stoneman Douglas observed, the Everglades is constantly changing and shifting – rather than a static swamp, it is actually a "river of grass," that moves slowly and inexorably toward the coast.

Everglades National Park has been designated a World Heritage Site, an International Biosphere Reserve, and a Wetland of International Importance.

The strange beauty of this region and the diversity of its wildlife may be explored through the park's many nature trails. There is a visitor center, a full-service marina, boat-launching ramps, and boat rentals to further penetrate the wilderness. The **Shark Valley Observation Tower** overlooks endless miles

of wilderness. Campers will find all facilities are available, and the less rugged will enjoy the comfortable, air-conditioned rooms at the **Flamingo Lodge and Restaurant**, overlooking Florida Bay. Rates and availability vary seasonally.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

Marjory Stoneman Douglas' book, *The Everglades: River of Grass*, was published in 1947, the same year that Everglades National Park was established. The book focused public attention on the importance of Everglades conservation. A fierce conservationist all her life, Douglas died at her Coconut Grove home in 1998 at the age of 108.

FAIRCHILD TROPICAL GARDEN
10901 Old Cutler Road
South Miami
☎ 305-667-1651
www.ftg.org
Admission: adults, $8; children 12 and under free

Children 12 and under are admitted free at Fairchild Tropical Garden.

One of the world's foremost botanical gardens, this 83-acre park is among the most popular visitor attractions, as well as a center for environmental education, horticulture and conservation. Palms, cycads, flowering trees and vines thrive in the Florida sunshine, and a museum of plant exploration, a conservatory, a rainforest, and a sunken garden present rarer specimens. Winding paths, lakes, scenic overlooks and lily ponds offer incomparable views and splendid photo opportunities, and narrated tram tours explain the Garden's role in preserving tropi-

cal bio-diversity. The Garden Shop sells tropical gardening books and unique gifts. The Garden Café is open daily.

FRUIT & SPICE PARK
24801 SW 187 Avenue
Homestead
☎ 305-247-5727
Admission: adults, $3.50; 12 and under, $1

The Fruit & Spice Park hosts the annual Redland Natural Arts Festival in January.

A 32-acre tropical park in the heart of the Redland district near Homestead, the floral emphasis here is on the savory side. More than 500 varieties of exotic and subtropical fruits, spice and herb trees from all over the world make it the only botanical garden of its type in the US. Seminars and tours are featured, along with the park's own gourmet and fruit gift store.

GATOR PARK
24050 SW 8th Street
Everglades
☎ 305-559-2255
www.gatorpark.com
Admission: adults, $14; ages seven-11, $7.50

The unique ecosystem of the Everglades is best explored by airboat, and Gator Park offers a narrated tour to brings visitors deep into this watery world. Alligator wrestling and wildlife shows are presented, and the restaurant serves many Everglades specialties such as wild boar, alligator and frogs legs, as well as traditional fare. A full hookup RV Park allows camping in the heart of the Everglades, and there is a gift shop.

ICHIMURA MIAMI-JAPAN GARDEN
950 MacArthur Causeway (Watson Island)
Free

An echo of old-time Japan in modern Miami, this charming garden is blessed by an eight-ton granite statue of Hotei, the smiling god of prosperity. There is a rock garden, stone lanterns, a pond, and a 300-year-old stone pagoda. The traditional bridge leads to a pavilion designed in the style of a Buddhist Temple.

MICCOSUKEE INDIAN VILLAGE & EVERGLADES TOURS
US Highway 41
27 miles west of Homestead Turnpike Ext.
☎ 305-223-8380
www.miccosukeetribe.com
Fee: adults, $5; seniors $4; ages five-12, $3.50

Explore the Everglades with the folks who call it home. Here, an authentic Indian village recalls the history of the unconquerable Miccosukee tribe. Originally part of the Creek Nation, the Miccosukees retreated into the Everglades following the third and final Seminole War in 1858. Today, they display their culture to curious Westerners through crafts demonstrations, a museum of Native American artifacts, art and clothing, alligator exhibits, a gift shop and restaurant. Visitors also can take an airboat ride to a traditional Indian camp.

If you visit the Indian Village over the holidays, don't miss the annual Miccosukee Indian Arts & Crafts Festival, held every December.

Animal Attractions

MIAMI SEAQUARIUM
4400 Rickenbacker Causeway
Key Biscayne
☎ 305-361-5705
www.miamiseaquarium.com
Admission: adults, $21.95; ages three to nine, $16.95

Is life really better down where it's wetter? The Miami Seaquarium takes guests to the wonderful world under the sea with a variety of sea-animal shows featuring graceful dancing dolphins, boisterous barking seals, and the awesome power of Lolita, the three-ton killer whale. TV superstar Flipper makes an appearance, along with rare and exotic tropical fish, fearsome moray eels, and silent, malevolent sharks. A unique new Dolphin Interaction Program permits participants to enter the Flipper Lagoon and experience a one-on-one encounter with these magnificent marine mammals. Exciting adventure blends with education in ecology as this famed park combines nature exhibits, face-to-face animal encounters, mini-habitats of reef and rainforest, with a mix of food and shopping opportunities.

MIAMI METROZOO
12400 SW 152nd Street
Miami
☎ 305-251-0400
www.metro-dade.com/parks
Admission: adults, $8; ages three-12, $4

Jungles of the world are re-created in miniature to provide a living-free lifestyle for more than 800 animals in one of the world's most scenic zoos. All the

dramatic denizens of the African Lion's Kingdom are here, in habitats reminiscent of their homelands. Tigers prowl the re-created ruins of ancient Cambodian temples; the deer and the antelope play in landscapes crafted to resemble the American West; and smiling crocodiles bask beside palm-fringed ponds. Metrozoo features the rare and unusual, too, like white tigers, lovable little meerkats, and exotic birds. A Children's Zoo delights youngsters with close-up encounters with gentle creatures. Picturesque footpaths let guests feel like old-time explorers, or the "big picture" may be viewed from an air-conditioned monorail. There are three food courts and a gift shop.

MONKEY JUNGLE
14805 SW 216 Street
South Miami-Dade County
☎ 305-235-1611
www.monkeyjungle.com
Admission: adults, $13.50; ages four to 12, $8

Monkey Jungle's famous slogan is absolutely true – it's "where the humans are caged and the monkeys run free." Monkey melodrama is the main attraction as scampering simians chatter through the treetops of this lush, tropical jungle, viewed by visitors in wire tunnels. This wild kingdom is up-close and full of life, and you'll observe the unique society and interactions of many colorful primates. Monkeys love to show off as much as audiences love watching them, and there are continuous trained animal shows, while crab-eating monkeys demonstrate their diving skills. There is a large exhibit of fossils, many rare parrots, a snack bar and gift shop.

PARROT JUNGLE & GARDENS
11000 SW 57th Avenue
Miami
☎ 305-666-7834
www.parrotjungle.com
Admission: adults, $14.95 ; ages three to 10, $9.95

Parrot Jungle is scheduled to move to Watson Island, off the MacArthur Causeway between mainland Miami and the beach, in 2002.

Flamboyant parrots flying free and feeding from your hand are just the first act in this colorful bird sanctuary. Beautiful garden-like settings re-create the wilderness background for families of flamingoes, apes and alligators. There are trained wildlife shows, a petting zoo, and a real-life rainforest experience, "Creatures in the Mist: A Rainforest Adventure." The Parrot Café is popular with Miami residents as well as visitors, and offers a fascinating view of the park and its dazzling denizens. A restaurant and gift shop are on-site.

PELICAN HARBOR SEABIRD STATION
1275 NE 79th Street Causeway
(behind Florida Marine Patrol)
North Miami
☎ 305-751-9840
Free

At this sanctuary for injured pelicans, the public may visit and take pictures as the birds go about their daily tasks of eating, raising their chicks and, hopefully, recovering. The sanctuary is open daily from dawn to dusk, and staff are on hand to answer questions from 8 am-noon and 2-5 pm.

Blast From the Past

ART DECO HISTORIC DISTRICT
Art Deco Welcome Center
1001 Ocean Drive
South Beach
☎ 305-531-3484
Tour fee: guided, $10 per person; self-guided, $5

The pastel-colored Art Deco district has become one of the most photographed neighborhoods in Miami. The fascinating architecture of once-faded hotels along the spectacular shoreline has been brought up-to-date, bringing rising popularity not only in tourism but in the fashion and film industries as well. Learn about this historic district and begin your self-guided walking tour anytime between 11 am and 4 pm daily. The Welcome Center is run by the Miami Design and Preservation League (☎ 305-672-2014), and incorporates a gift shop.

Guided walking tours of the Art Deco District depart from the Welcome Center on Thursdays at 6:30 pm and Saturdays at 10:30 am.

THE ANCIENT SPANISH MONASTERY
16711 W Dixie Highway
North Miami Beach
☎ 305-945-1462
www.spanishmonastery.com
Admission: $4.50 adults; $1 ages three to 12

The quiet cloisters of a medieval monastery seem a world removed from the vivid vacationlands of Miami, but just off Biscayne Boulevard in North Miami Beach is the oldest building in the Western Hemisphere. The Monastery of St. Bernard de Clairvaux was built in Spain in 1141, then brought to the US in pieces and reassembled here. Today the peaceful and prayerful halls and gardens are the setting for medieval works of art, and bring an echo of bygone days to the tourists of our own time. Worship ser-

vices are held on Sunday mornings; open to the public at other times.

THE ANCIENT SPANISH MONASTERY

The monastery, built between the years 1133 and 1141 in Spain, was almost fated to remain forever in a Brooklyn warehouse. In 1925, the monastery and cloisters were purchased by William Randolph Hearst, then disassembled and packed in 11,000 numbered wooden crates that were shipped to the US. However, an outbreak of hoof-and-mouth disease forced the shipment into quarantine, and the protective hay was subsequently burned as a precaution. Unfortunately, the stones were never replaced in their proper boxes, so the entire structure remained a huge jigsaw puzzle until 1952, when they were purchased by local developers W. Edgemon and R. Moss for use as a tourist attraction. It took 19 months and almost $1.5 million dollars to put the Monastery back together.

THE BARNACLE STATE HISTORIC SITE
3485 Main Highway
Coconut Grove
☎ 305-448-9445
Entrance/tour fee: $1 per person

Built in 1891 by Coconut Grove pioneer Ralph Munroe, the home and grounds still reflect early Grove living. Open Fridays-Mondays, 9 am-4 pm.

CORAL GABLES MERRICK HOUSE
907 Coral Way
Coral Gables
☎ 305-460-5361
Donations requested

The boyhood home of George E. Merrick, founder of the City of Coral Gables, is now a historic landmark. Built between 1899 and 1906, and filled with the Merrick family's collection of art and personal treasures, the house is open for tours Wednesdays and Sundays and by appointment.

WEEKS AIR MUSEUM
Tamiami Airport
14710 SW 128th Street
Miami (South County area)
☎ 305-233-5197
www.weeksairmuseum.com
Admission: $9.95 adults; $5.95 ages four-12

Weeks Air Museum offers some flights in vintage aircraft.

History comes to life in this unique collection of aircraft and artifacts. All the drama and daring of our brave airmen is a ghostly presence in the cockpits of the B-29 and the TP40 Warhawk that flew in actual combat. Other planes in the vintage collection include a P51-Mustang, a Lockheed P-38 Lightning and a Grumman Duck. Mementos may be purchased at the gift shop.

GOLD COAST RAILROAD MUSEUM
12450 SW 152nd Street
Miami (South County area)
☎ 305-253-0063
Admission: $5 adults; $3 ages three to 11; $2 for the weekends-only train ride

The Ferdinand Magellan was also used by presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Reagan and Bush.

Adjacent to Metrozoo in South Miami-Dade County, this unusual attraction features actual railroad cars displayed on a half-mile of real track. You'll see au-

thentic engines, Pullmans and dining cars, along with the Ferdinand Magellan, one of the country's most luxurious private railroad cars. Built for President Franklin Roosevelt in the 1930s, the car has been designated a National Historic Landmark.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL
1993 Meridian Avenue (at Dade Boulevard)
Miami Beach
☎ 305-538-1663
www.holocaustmmb.com
Free

A stunning, 42-foot-tall bronze sculpture of a reaching hand by Kenneth Treister is the centerpiece of this memorial to the six million Jewish victims of Nazi terror in World War II. There is a photograph exhibit and Memorial Wall inscribed with victims' names. The monument is a tribute to the tragedy of a people and to the triumph of spirit that has kept their faith alive.

VIZCAYA MUSEUM AND GARDENS
3251 South Miami Avenue
Coconut Grove
☎ 305-250-9133
Admission: $10 adults; $5 ages six-12

During the winter months, Vizcaya hosts evening walking tours, held when the moon is full.

The lifestyle of rich and famous industrialist James Deering is on display at Vizcaya, the Italian Renaissance-style villa that he built on Biscayne Bay. Filled with lavish antique furnishings and decorative art that Deering had shipped from around the world, Vizcaya looked as thought it had been standing for centuries when it was completed in 1916. The villa is surrounded by more than 10 acres of formal classic gardens, walkways and fountains. This major Miami landmark has been featured in countless

films because of its stunning beauty, including *Ace Ventura, Pet Detective*, starring Jim Carrey.

CORAL CASTLE
28655 South Dixie Highway
Miami (South County area)
☎ 305-248-6345
www.coralcastle.com
Admission: adults, $7.75; ages seven-12, $5

A national historical site, this strange set of structures was erected from native South Florida limestone rock by one dedicated man, Latvian immigrant Edward Leedskalnin. Working without special tools or training, Leedskalnin was able to move 1,100 tons of coral rock, fashioning huge pieces of furniture and other structures. What was his secret? No one knows. When the reticent Leedskalnin sensed he was being watched, he would stop working.

Just for Fun

GAMEWORKS
The Shops at Sunset Place
5701 Sunset Drive
South Miami
☎ 305-667-4263
www.gameworks.com
Admission is free, but there is a charge (50¢ and up) to play each game.

Founded by movie magician Steven Spielberg, and filled with all the heart-stopping thrills of his films, GameWorks' electronic games enable visitors to ride Jet Skis, escape from dinosaurs, challenge aliens, race cross-country by motorcycle, in a totally unique collection of state-of-the-art presentations. The Game-

Works Grill is a full service restaurant, and there is a full bar.

ISLAND QUEEN CRUISES
Departs from Bayside Marketplace
401 Biscayne Boulevard
Downtown Miami
☎ 305-379-5119
www.islandqueencruises.com

Island Queen also offers speed boat rides aboard the Bayside Blaster *as well as nightly disco cruises.*

Island Queen Cruises' sightseeing tours depart Bayside Marketplace to sweep across the bay and take in the Port of Miami, Fisher Island, Miami Beach, Star Island, Palm Island, Venetian Island, all the enchanting islands and all the spectacular sights in 1½ hours. Private charter and disco cruise options are also available. Tours are conducted all year long, and depart every hour on the hour starting at 11 am. Reservations are required for groups of 20 or more; rates are $14 for adults and $7 for children 12 and under.

MIAMI MUSEUM OF SCIENCE & SPACE TRANSIT PLANETARIUM
3280 South Miami Avenue
Coconut Grove
☎ 305-854-4247
www.miamisci.org
Admission: $10 adults; $6 ages three-12

See the moon and the stars through telescopes at the science museum's Weintraub Observatory, Fridays from 8-10 pm, weather permitting.

The cultural crossroads of Miami make it the ideal venue for the Science Center of the Americas, a new venture between the Miami Museum of Science and the Smithsonian Institution. The Museum's goal is to present highlights of the explorations of Latin America and the Caribbean using dynamic, multilingual exhibits and presentations that range from dinosaurs and pre-Columbian artifacts to large screen films and cutting-edge technology.

Family vacation fun blends with educational marvels in the hands-on hall of science and interactive computer programs. The museum is also home to the Falcon Batchelor Bird of Prey Center, with daily demonstrations of how injured birds are restored to soaring into the skies. A variety of changing exhibits are also featured throughout the year. And visitors can soar all the way to the stars at the Space Transit Planetarium, with sparkling sky shows, laser shows and multi-media extravaganzas.

MICCOSUKEE INDIAN GAMING
SW 8th Street & Krome Avenue
South Miami-Dade County
☎ 305-222-4600
www.miccosukee.com

The world of the old-time riverboat gamblers goes high-tech at Miccosukee Indian Gaming. Lightning Lotto, Texas Hold 'Em, and High-Stakes Bingo are just part of this whole new world of fun and excitement, open 24 hours. Over 1,200 state-of-the-art Video Gaming Machines offer big excitement and big winnings. The Gaming Center is for adults only, but supervised child care is available in on-site play areas. For cocktails and dancing, the Cypress Lounge is always open, and affordable gourmet dining at the Café Hammock makes this a full service entertainment complex where you can always bet on a great time.

VENETIAN POOL
2701 De SotoBoulevard
Coral Gables
☎ 305-460-5356
www.venetianpool.com
Admission: adults, $5.50 winter, $8.50 summer; children age three and up, $4.50

Formed from a coral rock quarry in 1923, Venetian Pool is on the National Register of Historic Places.

A historic landmark that is also a popular swimming hole for visitors and residents alike, this magnificent pool in Coral Gables is a Venetian-style lagoon carved out of coral rock. Caves, bridges and waterfalls add to the surreal scenery. Children under three are not allowed in the pool.

SCHOONER *HERITAGE*
Departs from Bayside Marketplace
401 Biscayne Boulevard
Downtown Miami
☎ 305-442-9697
Fee: $15 per person

Take to the waters the way they did in olden times aboard a picturesque tall ship. Narrated day and moonlight sails focus on the history of Miami around Biscayne Bay. During the off-season, two-hour sails depart at 1:30 pm and 4 pm, and a 6:30 pm trip is added during winter months. On weekends, nightly motor cruises depart every hour. No reservations are required, but call the day before in case the boat is on a private charter.

TROPICAL FUN CENTER
27201 South Dixie Highway (US-1)
South Miami-Dade County
☎ 305-246-3731
Admission is free, but there is a charge (see below) for each ride & game.

A lush, tropical atmosphere surrounds this fast-paced entertainment park. Visitors may enjoy adventure-style miniature golf, speedy go-cart track, raging river kiddie bumper boats, or try the electronic games in the air conditioned arcade. Games cost 25¢ and up for arcade games; $4.50 for miniature golf and go-carts; $17 for paintball.

THE MIAMI CIRCLE

It isn't exactly another gated attraction, but it's a definite point of interest in Miami. In September 1998, during a routine archaeological investigation by Miami-Dade County at the site of the old Brickell Point Apartments at the mouth of the Miami River, archaeologists found something intriguing – unique features cut into the bedrock. At first, scientists weren't sure what they were dealing with, but came to realize that they had unearthed the site of an ancient Tequesta Indian Village dating back more than 2,000 years. Now called the Miami Circle, this prehistoric site is still being excavated and examined. For more information, call the Miami-Dade Historic Preservation Division at ☎ 305-375-4958.

Fairs, Fiestas, Festivals & Food

From beach bashes to book fairs to band concerts, from Hispanic to historic to hillbilly, there is literally something for everyone at Miami's many fairs and festivals. With the city's proximity to the Caribbean, it's only natural that the infectious, fun-loving spirit of the islands would make its way here. But even home-grown festivals have that special taste of the tropics.

The following calendar of events highlights some of Miami's major happenings. For more event information, call the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, ☎ 305-539-3063, 305-539-3034 or 800-933-8448.

TIP

Please call individual organizations to confirm exact event dates.

January

Art Deco Weekend
Featuring a street fair, lecture and film series, live period entertainment, juried art exhibitions, children's events and tours of the Art Deco District. Ocean Drive, Miami Beach; ☎ 305-531-3484.

Annual Indian Arts Festival
American Indian artisans from all over the Continental Americas gather for a festival featuring cos-

tumed Indian dancers alligator wrestling and authentic Indian crafts and foods. Miccosukee Indian Village, 27 miles west of the Florida's Turnpike on SW 8th Street; ☎ 305-223-8380.

Farmer's Market at Merrick Park
Running mid-January through the end of March, this weekend event features vegetable and fruit stands, cooking and gardening demonstrations, and baked goods. Coral Gables City Hall, 405 Biltmore Way; ☎ 305-460-5310.

February

Black Heritage Month
A month-long celebration featuring theater, dance, festivals and more at various locations throughout Miami; ☎ 305-636-2390.

Coconut Grove Arts Festival
Ranked one of the top fine arts festivals in the country, this three-day event presents a diverse selection of original artwork created by more than 340 visual artists. Also includes food and live entertainment. Locations are McFarlane Road, South Bayshore Drive, Pan American Drive, Peacock Park and Myers Park; ☎ 305-447-0401, www.coconutgroveartsfest.com.

Homestead Championship Rodeo
Exciting roping and riding events, plus great homestyle food. Doc Demilley Rodeo Arena, Harris Field, US-1 and SW 312th Street, Homestead; ☎ 305-247-3515.

Miami Film Festival
This annual event takes place during 10 days in February, and brings to South Florida some of the best-crafted, most moving films from around the world. Past screenings include *Belle Epoque* and *The Buena Vista Social Club*. Gusman Center for the Performing Arts, downtown Miami. ☎ 305-372-0925; www.miamifilmfestival.com.

Miami International Boat Show & Strictly Sail
More than 2,000 exhibitors will feature the latest powerboats, engines, electronics and accessories on 2.5 million square feet of exhibition space spanning three locations, all connected via courtesy shuttle bus. Miami Beach Convention Center, 1901 Convention Center Drive; ☎ 305-531-8410, www.boatshows.com.

March

Carnaval Miami
Ten days of festivities include concerts, an 8K run, a golf classic, beauty pageant and Calle Ocho, which takes over SW 8th Street from 4th to 27th avenues and fills it with musical stages, folkloric presentations, children's activities and food vendors. ☎ 305-644-8888, www.carnavalmiami.com.

Italian Renaissance Festival
This annual fair features jousting, actors and singers, a live chess game, arts, crafts and food. Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, 3251 South Miami Avenue; ☎ 305-250-9133, ext. 2250.

Miami-Dade County Fair & Exposition
With over 80 acres of fairgrounds, a mile-long midway, more than 100 rides, free live entertainment, three exhibit halls and 200 acres of free parking. Fair/Expo Center, Coral Way and SW 112th Avenue; ☎ 305-223-7060.

April

Dade Heritage Days
A four-week event celebrating the heritage of Dade County, including an art fair, boat trips and tours. Various locations throughout Miami-Dade County. ☎ 305-358-9572.

May

Redland International Orchid Show
View these exotic blooms in all their colorful glory. Fruit & Spice Park, 24801 SW 187th Avenue, Homestead; ☎ 305-247-5727.

June

Miami/Bahamas Goombay Festival
Celebrating Coconut Grove's Bahamian roots with steel bands, junkanoo parades, drills performed by the Royal Bahamian Police Marching Band, arts and crafts, and typical Bahamian food. Along Grand Avenue to Douglas Road; ☎ 305-372-9966.

July

Annual Key Biscayne 4th of July Celebration
Enjoy a parade, picnic and fireworks to celebrate the nation's birthday. The Village Green on Crandon Boulevard, Key Biscayne; ☎ 305-365-8901.

August

The Annual Miami Reggae Festival
Great live music and Jamaican food. Bayfront Park Amphitheater, 301 Biscayne Boulevard, Downtown Miami Area; ☎ 305-891-2944.

September

Festival Miami
Presented by the University of Miami School of Music, this six-week festival showcases international and local artists in an extravaganza of music. Gusman Concert Hall, University of Miami, 1314 Miller Drive, Coral Gables; ☎ 305-284-4940.

October

Hispanic Heritage Festival
Includes a host of community events, a golf classic and a gala street party complete with Latin performers, food, and arts and crafts. ☎ 305-541-5023, www.hispanicfestival.com.

Annual Jewish Book Fair
Author lectures, workshops and musical performances highlight this annual examination of contemporary Jewish literature. Dave and Mary Alper Jewish Community Center, 11155 SW 112th Avenue, Kendall; ☎ 305-271-9000.

Columbus Day Regatta
More than 200 sailboats streak across Biscayne Bay during two days of thrilling races between Key Biscayne Island and Dinner Key Channel. ☎ 305-858-3320, columbusdayregatta.net.

November

Miami Book Fair International
A literary event featuring evenings with top writers, cooking demonstrations, rare books and children's programs, and many other exhibitors. Miami-Dade Community College, Wolfson Campus, 300 NE 2nd Avenue, Downtown Miami; ☎ 305-237-3258, www.miamibookfair.com.

December

Orange Bowl Parade
This fabulous spectacle parades along Biscayne Boulevard in downtown Miami every New Year's Eve, usually beginning at about 6:30 pm. ☎ 305-371-4600.

Arts & Culture

Miami's cultural scene is not just alive and well, but growing by leaps and bounds. Miami is in the midst of an artistic boom in world-class entertainment and activities, with more than 600 non-profit cultural organizations offering dance, theater, music and visual arts. In 1996, an estimated three million people attended area cultural programs, and savvy visitors have been planning ahead to attend concerts, plays, and festivals, making Miami's rich cultural kaleidoscope part of their vacation experience.

TIP

Call the individual organizations listed below for current schedules, or pick up a copy of the *Miami & the Beaches Cultural Guide* at the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau, 701 Brickell Avenue, Suite 2700; or at the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce, 420 Lincoln Road.

Performance Venues & Organizations

Actors' Playhouse at the Miracle Theatre
A theatrical miracle on Coral Gables' famed Miracle Mile, and one of Dade County's major critically acclaimed cultural institutions, the **Actor's Playhouse** presents professional theater with performances for both adults and children at affordable prices. Housed in the **Miracle Theatre**, recently re-

stored to the original grandeur of its '30s Art Deco design, the Actor's Playhouse welcomes inquiries at 280 Miracle Mile, Coral Gables; ☎ 305-444-9293, www.actorsplayhouse.org.

African Heritage Cultural Arts Center
The heart of the African-American cultural community, this center in Liberty City is a training facility and showcase for dance, music, drama, and visual arts students. The five-building complex includes the **Joseph Caleb Auditorium**, and is the home of the Black Film Festival, which has hosted such Hollywood notables as actor Danny Glover and director Spike Lee. In addition to the theater, the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center contains an art gallery, dance, art and music studios. ☎ 305-638-6771.

Ballet Español Rosita Segovia
Rosita Segovia is famous as one of the world's foremost experts in Spanish dance, and her fiery flair strikes sparks from the flashing feet of her dance company, the **Segovia Ballet Español**. A professional dance company based in Miami, Segovia Ballet Español is acclaimed for the scintillating excitement of its presentations of Spanish dance in all its forms, such as classical Spanish, Escuela Bolera, folkloric, neo-classical Spanish, and a flamenco that calls for the fire extinguishers. This is terpsichorean Tabasco at its hottest. For more information, Ballet Español may be contacted c/o Miami Dance Futures; ☎ 305-237-3582, www.miamidance.com.

City Theatre
The discovery and development of new and unique short-form drama material is the mission of the City Theatre group in Coral Gables. This award-winning company produces both the annual Summer Shorts

Festival performed at the Jerry Herman Ring Theatre and the Winter Shorts Festival, performed at the Colony Theater. The acclaimed Shorts Festivals feature a provocative and stimulating selection of original short plays, with comedies, musicals and dramas all represented. ☎ 305-365-5400, www.citytheatre.com.

An Art Deco movie house built by Paramount Pictures in the 1930s on Miami Beach's Lincoln Road, the Colony Theater is within walking distance of the beach.

Colony Theater
Centrally located in the South Beach district of boutiques, cafés, galleries and nightlife, the Colony has an annual attendance of over 80,000, and has hosted such luminaries as Lanie Kazan, Eartha Kitt, Sandra Bernhard, and Second City, along with the Florida Grand Opera, several film festivals and special screenings by United Artists, MTV, HBO and Touchstone Pictures. A recent addition to the theater is the Colony Café, with fine coffees, desserts, light fare, and full bar service. 1040 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach; ☎ 305-674-1026.

Coconut Grove Playhouse
A nationally recognized landmark, the **Coconut Grove Playhous**e has been presenting exciting casts in a diverse array of legendary theatrical entertainments since its 1956 opening with the US premiere of *Waiting for Godot,* starring Bert Lahr and Tom Ewell. A marvelous mix of celebrated stars followed, including Tallulah Bankhead, George C. Scott, Ethel Merman, Hal Holbrook, Eli Wallach, and Liza Minnelli, to name a few, and a variety of plays, from Anthony Quayle in *Macbeth* to Jack Klugman and Tony Randall in *The Sunshine Boys*. Highlights from a recent season included Kathleen Turner as the outrageous stage-and-screen headliner Tallulah Bankhead. Major world and national premieres are presented on the Mainstage, and in

the more intimate Encore Room Theatre. 3500 Main Highway, Coconut Grove, FL 33133; ☎ 305-442-4000, www.cgplayhouse.com.

The Playhouse's 2000-2001 season is scheduled to include *Little Shop of Horrors*; Arthur Miller's *The Price;* a revival of the popular *Side By Side By Sondheim*; and Edward Albee's Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning *A Delicate Balance.*

Concert Association of Florida
This not-for-profit organization is a leading cultural force in advancing the arts. As Florida's largest host of internationally known classical orchestras and musicians, the Concert Association has presented notable classical music and dance concerts, showcasing the finest world-renowned talent, from symphonies to artistic recitals to chamber music ensembles. The recent season contained such diverse delights as pianist Van Cliburn, cellist Yo Yo Ma, sopranos Marilyn Horne and Denyce Graves, the Tonhalle Orchestra of Zurich, and the Russian National Orchestra. ☎ 305-532-3491, www.concertfla.org.

Legendary tenor Luciano Pavarotti has appeared with the Concert Association, as have Itzhak Perlman, Vladimir Ashkenazy and Placido Domingo.

Florida Grand Opera
Residents and visitors alike have been thrilled for years by the greatest voices in the world singing the greatest pieces ever written, in performances that have made Florida Grand Opera one of Miami's most respected cultural institutions. Exciting new works are also presented, such as *Balseros*, which brought the saga and struggle of Cuban rafters into the world of art and opera. The company, which presents five performances each season, has delighted audiences with such favorites as *Don Giovanni*, *La Traviata*, and the whirling harmonics of *Die Fledermaus*. ☎ 305-854-1643 www.fgo.org.

Florida Philharmonic Orchestra
The Florida Philharmonic Orchestra is the largest performing arts organization in the state of Florida, and the only regional orchestra in the country. Under the guidance of music director James Judd, the orchestra is recognized nationally for its innovation and accomplishments, recently earning world acclaim for its recording of Mahler's Symphony No. 1 (The Titan Symphony). The Philharmonic performs 165 concerts annually, so visitors can plan on some first-rate musical accompaniment to their vacations. ☎ 800-226-1812, www.floridaphilharmonic.org.

Freddick Bratcher and Company
In 1975, the Fusion Dance Company stunned Miami, and the national dancing world, with its innovative choreography and lively talent. Fusion director and dance master Freddick Bratcher, who trained with Martha Graham and Alvin Ailey, subsequently formed his own company, which is still thriving. Displaying the diversity of South Florida in dazzling dance formats using jazz, modern, classical and narrative-style dance, Mr. Bratcher presents a seasonal program every year. His company has collaborated with other local companies, and has performed throughout the country and on national television. In addition, Mr. Bratcher provides dance education and youth development opportunities to schools and disadvantaged community members. ☎ 305-448-2021, www.cdgfl.org/members/freddick.

Gusman Center for the Performing Arts
The Olympia Theatre in downtown Miami was once a glittering old-style movie palace in the lavish fashion of the roaring '20s, with twinkling lights in the vaulted ceiling and flickering images of Rudolph Valentino on the screen. Today it is considered a

unique architectural treasure, and has been reborn as the Gusman Center for the Performing Arts, and hosts prestigious cultural groups such as the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra, and special events like the Miami Film Festival and the Italian Film Festival. Limited engagements by performers of international renown round out the offerings. 174 E. Flagler Street, downtown Miami; ☎ 305-374-2444.

Jackie Gleason Theater
Visitors who want to catch top-notch Broadway touring productions should keep track of the impressive schedule of year-round performances at the Jackie Gleason Theater of the Performing Arts. Named for "the great one," the theater presents great entertainment to match, and recently featured David Copperfield, *Jekyll & Hyde*, *Fosse*, and the Joffrey Ballet. Adjacent to the Miami Beach Convention Center and located in the South Beach Art Deco district, the Jackie Gleason Theater presents "the greatest" array of performers and production companies, including the Miami City Ballet, in a deco-designed temple to the performing arts. And away you go, to the Jackie Gleason Theater at 1700 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach; ☎ 305-673-7300, www.gleasontheater.com.

James L. Knight International Center
In downtown Miami, the James L. Knight Center has a reputation as one of the city's best concert halls. All types of music, from rock to rap, live concerts and shows, reflecting the different styles and flavors of the Miami mix, have appeared on its stage. The variety of the performances is matched by the vivacity of the performers; from bass to banjo to balalaika, the schedule is sure to include memorable

musical moments. 400 SE 2nd Avenue, downtown Miami; ☎ 305-372-4633, www.jlknightcenter.com.

Miami City Ballet
A world-class professional ballet company, Miami City Ballet is one of the top five ballet companies in the United States. Under the artistic direction of the famed Edward Villella, the first American-born male star of the New York City Ballet, the company's style is based on the vision of legendary choreographer George Balanchine. Both classical and contemporary works are performed, in a repertoire of over 85 ballets, including 37 world premieres. The Miami City Ballet's regular season runs from October through March, when some 15,000 season subscribers are joined by an equal number of single-ticket buyers; and over 30,000 enjoy the million-dollar holiday spectacular, George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker;* ☎ 305-532-4880, www.miamicityballet.org.

Momentum Dance Company
One of Florida's oldest contemporary dance companies, in one of Miami's most artistic and picturesque neighborhoods, Momentum Dance Company brings flair and innovation to the Coconut Grove dance scene. Reaching out to the surrounding community, the company presents a special children's series to introduce youngsters to the world of dance, as well as workshops, lecture demonstrations, and open rehearsals. ☎ 305-858-7002, www.momentumdance.com.

New World Symphony
For 10 years, the New World Symphony has been presenting an extraordinary array of musical events that reflect the rich blend of cultures and countries

represented in Greater Miami. A recent season featured a distinctive mix of gospel, gypsy, mambo, and Beethoven; it's diversity at its most dazzling. The local performance season includes five series of full-orchestra concerts, chamber music, family concerts and free concerts. Considered a "must-see" for visitors, the New World Symphony may be contacted at ☎ 305-673-3331, www.nws.org.

You can drop in on one of New World Symphony's open rehearsals; call for details.

New Theatre
Founded in 1986 by husband-and-wife team Rafael de Acha and Kimberly Daniel, the New Theatre is acclaimed for its productions of classical and contemporary plays from America and Europe. Honors and awards include the Key to the City of Coral Gables, and more than 30 Carbonell award nominations (South Florida's regional "Tony"). 65 Almeria Avenue, Coral Gables; ☎ 305-443-5909, www.new-theatre.com.

Teatro Avante
Established in 1979, Teatro Avante was seen as a vehicle for preserving Hispanic cultural heritage, and enhancing inter-group understanding, by producing the highest quality contemporary and classical Spanish-language plays, with supertitles in English. Productions have been staged of works by the great playwrights of Spain, Cuba and Peru, as well as the US, France and England. ☎ 305-445-8877, www.teatroavante.com.

Teatro Avante's annual International Hispanic Theatre Festival is held in June at various venues.

Art Museums & Galleries

Art Center/South Florida
The bustling creativity of the South Beach art scene invites visitors behind the scenes, as the Art Center

welcomes the public to the studios of more than 60 outstanding artists. Two exhibition spaces highlight local talent, and guests who are inspired by being present at the creation may develop their own talent at the studio school (Fee for classes). 800-810 Lincoln Road; ☎ 305-674-8278, www.artcentersf.org.

Bass Museum of Art
Fresh on the heels of a massive expansion, including a re-designed facility created by Japanese architect Arata Isozaki, the Bass Museum of Art has tripled its exhibition space and boasts such new amenities as an outdoor sculpture terrace, café and courtyard, and museum shop. Their permanent collection encompasses more than 2,800 objects, including European old masters; 20th-century paintings; sculpture; graphics; photography; and architectural and design arts from North America, Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, the museum welcomes traveling exhibits throughout the year. 2121 Park Avenue, Miami Beach, ☎ 305-673-7530, www.bassmuseum.org.

Lowe Art Museum
The Lowe Art Museum is located on the University of Miami campus.

Permanent exhibits include Italian Renaissance, Egyptian, and Greco-Roman antiquities, a European Collection that includes works by Picasso and Monet, and Native American artifacts. Traveling exhibitions create constant variety. University of Miami, 1301 Stanford Drive, Coral Gables; ☎ 305-284-3535, www.lowemuseum.org.

Museum of Contemporary Art
The cutting edge of artistic innovation is presented in rotating exhibitions and a variety of educational programs. 770 NE 125th Street, North Miami; ☎ 305-893-6211, www.mocanomi.org.

Miami Art Museum
Part of the Metro-Dade Cultural Center in downtown Miami, this museum showcases international art since World War II, with the emphasis on art of the Western Hemisphere. Touring exhibitions and new work are also presented. 101 West Flagler Street; ☎ 305-375-3000, www.miamiartmuseum.org.

The Wolfsonian/FIU
The Art Deco District of Miami Beach surrounds this museum and study center at Florida International University. A collection of more than 70,000 art objects from America and Europe are featured. 101 Washington Avenue, ☎ 305-531-1001, www.wolfsonian.org.

Historical Museums

Historical Museum of Southern Florida
In this state-of-the-art museum, part of the Metro-Dade Cultural Center, guests of all ages can learn about South Florida's fascinating past through hands-on displays and interactive exhibits. For those visitors to Miami who want to see how it all began, group tours and walking tours through the downtown area are available by reservation. 101 West Flagler Street, downtown; ☎ 305-375-1492, www.historicalmuseum.org.

Sanford L. Ziff Jewish Museum of Florida
A restored synagogue, whose timeless beauty is enhanced by Art Deco chandeliers and 80 stained-glass windows, is the home of this fascinating tour of Jewish history. The core of the museum is *MOSAIC: Jewish Life in Florida*, presenting photos and artifacts illustrating the Jewish experience in Florida

since 1763. The Time Line Wall of Jewish History goes even deeper into the past. Temporary exhibits are featured, and there are films and a museum store. The Museum is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. 301 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach; ☎ 305-672-5044, www.jewishmuseum.com.

Tours

Tour Companies

Whether you're looking for a city tour, a nature tour or both, the following companies will guide you to Miami's most interesting sights and sites. Some include water excursions, but be sure to check the Boating listings as well if you're looking for a boat tour.

TIP

Unless otherwise noted, tour companies require advance booking.

Action Helicopters
Take a ride or take a tour. Options include a quick, non-narrated ride; a 12-minute tour that takes in South Beach and Bayside; a 25-mile trip along the skyline including Vizcaya and Virginia Key; and a 45-mile trip encompassing Key Biscayne and Miami Beach all the way up to Bal Harbour. Trips are offered weekdays, 9 am-6 pm; weekends 10 am-7 pm; closed Mondays. Rates vary from $65 to $149 per person; no reservations are required. Watson Island

Heliport, 1000 MacArthur Causeway, ☎ 305-358-4723.

Biscayne Helicopter
Daily 30-minute helicopter tours are offered, along with charters on demand. Charter rates range from $400 for a half-hour, to $675 for an hour, per person. Tour rates are $80-$180 per person. Located at Kendall-Tamiami Executive Airport, 12800 SW 137th Avenue; ☎ 305-252-3883.

Flamingo Tours
Offering daily, narrated city tours with morning pick-up at hotels along Miami Beach and returning about 3-3:30 pm. Flamingo also has tours of Key West, the Everglades and Orlando. The city tour is $32 per person. Other tours are $39-$49 for the Everglades; $59 for Key West; and $99 for Orlando. ☎ 305-948-3822.

Miami Net Tours and Transportation
Featuring morning and afternoon city tours as well as combination city and boat tours that take in Biscayne Bay. Tour times are 10:30 am and 12:30 pm, with pick-up at the Biscayne Bay Marriott. Rates vary from $32 per person for a city tour, to $42 per person for a combination city-boat tour. ☎ 305-534-7787 or 888-591-5551, www.miaminettours.com.

Miami Nice Excursions
Miami Nice has a variety of city tours, with programs that include Bayside, the Seaquarium, Parrot Jungle, an Everglades airboat ride and the Sawgrass Mills mall. Tours run daily, 9 am-4 pm, with a stop for lunch. There are three separate Everglades tours, including a half-day Everglades/airboat tour; a full-day excursion through Everglades National

Miami Nice offers daily and overnight trips to Key West, Orlando excursions and full-day trips to the Kennedy Space Center.

Park to the west coast of Florida; and a full-day adventure combining an airboat ride and a visit to Everglades Alligator Farm. Air-conditioned tour buses can pick you up at hotels along Collins Avenue. Per person rates are $32 for a city tour, $49 for an Everglades tour, $59 for Key West, and $224 for a two-day trip to Orlando. ☎ 305-949-9180, www.miaminicetours.com.

Safari Tours
Offering two three-hour, narrated city tours daily, 10 am and 1 pm, departing from Bayside Marketplace. Also, tours including local attractions, bay cruises and more. Rates are $32 for a city tour or $42 for a combination city tour and bay cruise, per person. ☎ 305-956-9922.

Walking Tours

Art Deco District Walking Tour

Miami Beach's Art Deco District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Experience Miami Beach's unique Architectural Historic District on a leisurely, 90-minute guided tour that explores the largest concentration of Art Deco buildings in the world. Special focus is on Ocean Drive and Collins Avenue (a description of Art Deco and some sample sights you'll see follows these listings). Your guides – local historians and preservationists – will point out Deco-era arts and architecture, and fill you in on preservation efforts. Tours depart Saturdays at 10:30 am and Thursdays at 6:30 pm from the Art Deco Welcome Center, 1001 Ocean Drive, Miami Beach; ☎ 305-672-2014. No reservations are needed.

Another option at the Art Deco Welcome Center is the Art Deco District Self-Guided Audio Tour, available daily from 11 am-4 pm. Simply pop in your tape

and follow it through the Art Deco District. It lasts from 60-75 minutes. Pick up your tape and even rent the tape player at the Welcome Center. Try it on in-line skates!

MIAMI BEACH'S ART DECO DISTRICT

The roots of Art Deco go back to the 1925 Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes, when a new architectural style that seemed to embody industrial technology in its modern curves and lines caught the world's attention. In the US, Art Deco flourished during the 1930s, when buildings sported rounded corners, banded stripes, porthole windows and glass bricks that distorted light and images in interesting new ways.

On the southern end of Miami Beach, this latter style took on a tropical look with pelicans, nautical themes, stylized sunsets and tropical flowers blended into its pastel-colored lines, and hence became known as "Tropical Deco." Unlike the rest of the country, which was mired in the Depression in the '30s, Miami Beach's tourist-driven economy was booming, and hotels went up one after another.

During the '60s, however, the popularity of southern Miami Beach waned until, by the mid-'70s, the formerly resplendent hotels had become the ramshackle domain of retirees. In fact, the entire area was scheduled for the wrecking ball until a group of determined preservationists, led by the late Bar-

The Art Deco District is bounded on the east by Ocean Drive, on the west by Lenox Avenue, by 6th Street on the south and Lincoln Road on the north.

bara Baer Capitman, fought to save the region by having it designated a National Historic District. The success of this group, the Miami Design Preservation League, is evident today, as South Beach is one of Florida's most popular tourist attractions.

In addition to the now-renovated Art Deco buildings lining Ocean Drive and the surrounding streets, South Beach – or SoBe, as it is known locally – is Miami's nucleus of nightlife, art and culture, and a favorite spot for film crews from Hollywood and around the world.

We recommend a guided walking tour of the Art Deco District (see listing above), but if you're strolling the area on your own, keep your eyes peeled for the distinctive Deco architecture of the hotels along Ocean Drive, including the **Cardozo**, the **Clevelander**, the **Leslie**, the **Blue Moon**, the **Avalon** and the **Tides**. Along Collins Avenue, don't miss the **Essex House**, the **Chesterfield**, the **President**, the **Sovereign** and the **National Hotel**, world-famous for its one-of-a-kind, 205-foot "infinity" pool.

Historical Museum of Southern Florida
Follow local historian Dr. Paul George on a variety of walking tours, offered September to June and departing from various locations throughout the city. Programs include an exploration of Miami's past, taking in the city's first stone churches, hotels, schools, parks and waterfront sites; a tour through Coral Gables, one of the area's most historic neighborhoods; and a boat tour along Biscayne Bay, tak-

ing in the Port of Miami, the causeways and Miami Beach. Some tours meet at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida, 101 W Flagler Street. No reservations are needed. Call for exact schedules. ☎ 305-375-1621.

TIP

The beauty, energy and excitement of South Beach is celebrated each January during the annual **Art Deco Weekend**, which includes live entertainment, food and drink, art vendors, and special walking, bicycle, boat, and bus tours of the Art Deco District. Call the Miami Design Preservation League for more information, ☎ 305-672-2014.

Best Places to Stay

Miami has recently entered another boom period in hotel development, an era of growth the city hasn't seen since the early 1980s. In addition to the development of new luxury properties, older resorts are upgrading and expanding to compete, so the visitor wins on both counts.

Miami's accommodations range from the small boutique hotels of South Beach and the grand, historic hotels of Miami Beach, to the luxurious, European-style properties of Coral Gables and Coconut Grove and the relaxing oceanfront resorts of Key Biscayne.

There are scores of fine hotels throughout Greater Miami, but we have concentrated on properties located in the city's main tourism quadrants of South Beach and Miami Beach, downtown Miami, Coconut Grove, Key Biscayne, Coral Gables, the airport area and the Everglades.

TIP

Sales tax and hotel or bed taxes are usually added to the daily room rates. Be sure to ask about these taxes when you make your reservations, as they can add significantly to the cost of the room.

The Alive Price Scale

Our price scale is designed to give you a general idea of costs, and reflects a basic year-round range of room rates, excluding holidays and special events that may command higher prices. Hotel suites or other special accommodations will also be higher. Prices are per room, based on double occupancy.

As a southern seaside resort destination, Miami does have a high and low season and hotel rates rise and fall accordingly. Generally, high season starts in November and continues through April. So if a property is designated "moderate-expensive," for example, its rates fall within that range throughout the year, with the lower end reflecting low season. A number of hotels and resorts offer inclusive packages that bring the per-night rate down and feature such extras as meals and activities.

ACCOMMODATIONS PRICE SCALE	
Inexpensive	under $100
Moderate	$100-$200
Expensive	$200-$300
Deluxe	More than $300

Downtown Miami

BISCAYNE BAY MARRIOTT HOTEL & MARINA
1633 N. Bayshore Drive
☎ 305-374-3900 or 800-228-9290
www.marriott.com
Moderate-Expensive

Located at the southern border of downtown, this hotel has a 220-slip marina and multi-level deck overlooking beautiful Biscayne Bay. Imported marble accents create an aura of elegance; recreation includes tennis, squash, and nearby golf. Near all downtown venues and the Port of Miami, the Marriott has its own restaurant, lounge, and pool, and offers room service to its 603 rooms.

EVERGLADES HOTEL
244 Biscayne Boulevard
☎ 305-379-5461 or 800-327-5700
www.miamigate.com/everglades
Moderate

Located in the very heart of downtown, this restored landmark hotel faces Bayside Marketplace, the Port of Miami cruise ships and Metromover, and is close to the Miami Arena and James L. Knight Center, and is convenient to all area attractions and the hub

of the business community. The hotel offers 376 spacious rooms and suites with cable TV.

Amenities include a rooftop pool, two restaurants, on-site car rental, tour desk and banking, an electronic game room and dry cleaning/laundry services.

FORTUNE HOUSE ALL-SUITES HOTEL
185 SE 14th Terr.
☎ 305-349-5200 or 888-279-1228
www.fortunehousehotel.com
Expensive

This luxury condo-hotel on Brickell Avenue features one- and two-bedroom suites with full kitchens, cable TV and VCR, stereo with CD, washer and dryer, in-room fax machine and more. Amenities include an outdoor pool and hot tub, full fitness center, a sundries store and newsstand, a complete business center and a sundeck with gazebo and grills. The hotel also boasts convenient access to all the downtown happenings, and is just 15 minutes from Miami Beach in one direction or the airport in another.

HOLIDAY INN DOWNTOWN MIAMI
200 SE 2nd Avenue
☎ 305-374-3000 or 800-HOLIDAY (465-4329)
www.holiday-inn.com
Inexpensive-Moderate

This is the heart of downtown Miami, near Bayside Marketplace and the Brickell Avenue Financial District. The hotel's 258 rooms offer travelers the familiar Holiday Inn quality and amenities. There is a pool and a fitness center, a restaurant and lounge. A family-friendly policy lets kids eat and stay free during the summer.

HOTEL INTER-CONTINENTAL MIAMI
100 Chopin Plaza
☎ 305-577-1000 or 800-327-0200
www.interconti.com
Moderate-Expensive

This is an elegantly appointed hotel offering luxurious guest rooms and a full range of first-class facilities in a convenient downtown location. Overlooking Biscayne Bay, adjacent to Bayside Marketplace and Bayfront Park, the 639 rooms have many splendid views to choose from. Leisure amenities include two restaurants, two lounges, a large pool, fitness center, beauty salon and on-site shops.

HOWARD JOHNSON PORT OF MIAMI
1100 Biscayne Boulevard
☎ 305-358-3080 or 800-654-2000
Inexpensive-Moderate

As the name indicates, this hotel brings Howard Johnson's high quality and service to a location adjacent to Bicentennial Park at Biscayne Bay and the Port of Miami. Across from the American Airlines Miami Arena in central downtown Miami, the three-diamond property offers 115 rooms with private balconies overlooking the city and bay. The rooftop swimming pool has a panoramic view of the downtown skyline, Miami Beach, and Biscayne Bay; there is a restaurant/lounge on premises, guest laundry and cable TV. A shuttle to the Port of Miami is complimentary.

HYATT REGENCY MIAMI
400 SE 2nd Avenue
☎ 305-358-1234 or 800-633-7313
www.hyatt.com
Moderate-Expensive

The executive offices of the Hyatt Regency Miami really hum – with an American efficiency but to a Latin beat. The phones ring constantly and many languages are spoken fluently and all at once. This atrium hotel, situated on the scenic riverfront at Miami Convention Center, is at the center of the action in the downtown area. There are 612 rooms, 51 suites with luxury appointments, a business center, and audio-visual center, 30 function rooms, an outdoor pool and sports bar lounge. The leader of every country in the Western Hemisphere has stayed here, as have many show business personalities.

JW MARRIOTT HOTEL
1111 Brickell Avenue
☎ 305-374-1224
www.marriott.com
Expensive-Deluxe

Newly opened in September 2000, this 22-story business class hotel is in the heart of downtown Miami's business district. It's close to Bayside Marketplace, the Port of Miami, downtown shopping, and Coconut Grove. The hotel features 300 elegant rooms, including 22 suites with ergonomic work area, cable/satellite TV, mini-bar, complimentary coffee, weekday newspaper, and a host of other comforts. Three executive-level floors with a concierge lounge provide personalized attention, and a 24-hour business center is also available. Recreational amenities include a full spa and outdoor pool.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

More luxury is coming to Miami. Ritz-Carlton plans three Greater Miami locations: the Ritz-Carlton Grand Bay on Key Biscayne, the Ritz-Carlton Coconut Grove, and a South Beach location. All are expected to open in 2001. Planning a 2002 opening is the Four Seasons Hotel Miami, one block from Biscayne Bay, which will be the centerpiece of a proposed mixed-use development that includes luxury residences, retail and office space, and a sports club.

MANDARIN ORIENTAL MIAMI
500 Brickell Key Drive
☎ 305-373-1091 or 800-526-6566
www.mandarinoriental.com
Deluxe

Newly opened in November, 2000, on Brickell Key, a 44-acre island just offshore from the downtown business district, the luxury Mandarin Oriental Miami will feature 329 spacious guestrooms and suites, many with balconies overlooking the bay. Amenities at this city resort hotel will include a fully equipped spa and health center with tennis and squash courts, aerobics, Jacuzzi, steam room and sauna, and an outdoor pool. For the business traveler, there will be a 24-hour business center featuring a full range of secretarial services as well as extensive meeting and function space.

RAMADA DUPONT CENTER
300 Biscayne Boulevard Way
☎ 305-358-2541 or 800-272-6232
Inexpensive-Moderate

The former Dupont Plaza Hotel has welcomed Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Jimmy Carter, and many foreign dignitaries.

Miami's famous Dupont Plaza Hotel has been reborn as the Ramada Dupont Center. Opened in 1958, the Dupont Plaza was the site of many major event. Newly joined to the Ramada family of hotels, with its robust brand recognition, the renovated hotel brings Ramada quality and excellence in the mid-price category to this strong gateway location. Within walking distance of Bayside, the James L. Knight Center and Miami Convention Center, and in the heart of the downtown business and shopping districts, the hotel overlooks Biscayne Bay and the Miami River. There are 297 rooms, including bi-level suites, along with convention space for meetings, an outdoor pool and sunning deck, and a lounge with a view of beautiful Biscayne Bay.

SHERATON BISCAYNE BAY HOTEL
495 Brickell Avenue
☎ 305-373-6000 or 800-325-3535
www.sheraton.com
Moderate

On historic Brickell Point, just off the Brickell Avenue financial district, this hotel is close to the Miami-Dade Cultural Center, the downtown shopping district, and all the attractions and business centers, a recent $12.5 million renovation has upgraded the rooms, pool, fitness center, and restaurant. Accommodations include 598 rooms offering bay, pool and city views, along with 60 Club Level rooms. Amenities include a restaurant, lobby bar, outdoor heated pool, fitness center and on-site car rental facility.

South Beach

CASA GRANDE
834 Ocean Drive
☎ 305-672-7003 or 800-OUTPOST
www.islandoutpost.com
Expensive-Deluxe

A quiet, elegant setting in the middle of bustling South Beach, Casa Grande has an airy, tropical feel, with an aura of the Far East. Its decor is accented by handmade rugs from India, lamps covered in Batik prints, custom-made teak furniture from Indonesia, and antique columns from Rajasthan in the exotic lobby. Business and leisure travelers will appreciate the hotel's 34 junior and one- to three-bedroom suite units equipped with two-line phones with conference speakers, voice mail and dataports, CD players, cable TV, and full kitchens. There is room service, a concierge, and a multilingual staff to assist with laundry and dry cleaning. Other perks include nightly turn-down service and VIP access to local clubs. The hotel's renowned bistro, Mezzaluna, brings the flavors of Italy to this Island Outpost eatery.

Ask about midweek specials at the Casa Grande.

THE ALBION HOTEL
1650 James Avenue
☎ 305-913-1000 or 877-RUBELLS
www.rubellhotels.com
Expensive-Deluxe

The Albion is located one block from the ocean and Lincoln Road; it is one of the most picturesque of the old South Beach Hotels, designed in 1939 by Art Deco architect Igor Polevitsky, who described it as a "luxury ocean liner on dry land." Completely renovated under the ownership of Rubell Hotels, a concern that develops and manages architecturally sig-

The Rubell collection of Miami Beach hotels includes the Albion, the Greenview and the Beach House Bal Harbour.

nificant properties, the Albion merges historical perspective with contemporary commitment to quality. The "ocean liner" effect is enhanced by the 600-foot vertical pond in the lobby, portholes peeking into the 60-foot swimming pool, varying levels, such as the elevated sun deck, reminiscent of decks on a ship, and by superb service. The hotel features garden-view conference facilities and fine dining in the Mayya Restaurant. Accommodations include 100 guestrooms and suites featuring king-sized beds, custom-designed furniture, mini-bar, 24-hour room service, two-line phones with dataports, stereo and CD player, cable TV, organic toiletries and more.

CAVALIER
1320 Ocean Drive
☎ 305-531-8800 or 800-OUTPOST
www.islandoutpost.com
Moderate-Expensive

A Deco jewel built in 1936, the Cavalier features tropical vibes at a great location, with 45 rooms including three oceanfront suites. Interiors are relaxed and antique in tone, with terracotta-tiled floors, earthy decor, bold fabrics with African themes, work desks, and photos celebrating the fashion industry. Room amenities include hair dryers, in-room safes, telephone with voice mail, CD players, fully stocked mini bars and cable TV/VCR.

DAYS INN ART DECO
100 21st Street
☎ 305-538-6631 or 800-451-3345
Inexpensive-Moderate

An affordable alternative in the Art Deco district, Days Inn is directly on the beach with sweeping ocean views. This hotel combines the Days Inn effi-

ciency guests have come to expect with the tropical atmosphere, rattan furniture and exotic jungle murals that typify the Miami mystique.

GREENVIEW HOTEL
1671 Washington Avenue
☎ 305-531-6588 or 877-RUBELLS
Moderate-Expensive

Two blocks from the Atlantic Ocean, in the very heart of the Art Deco district, is the Greenview, another South Beach classic refurbished by Rubell Hotels. Surrounded by the pastel pigments and tropical tints of the other hotels, the sleek and serene Greenview is a minimalist yet elegant environment evocative of black-and-white glamour photography. The decor is understated and oasis-like; a courtyard with a fountain opens onto an intimate living room-like lobby, with classic white upholstery, black wrought-iron railings, and glass-block windows. Mid-century Modernist collector's pieces complete the '30s atmosphere. As with all Rubell Hotels, the look is yesterday and the service is tomorrow – cable television, an international periodical library, 24-hour multilingual concierges, fax and copy service, same-day valet and laundry, all amenities. Baker's Breakfast is served daily until noon and is included in the room price. The Greenview's own secret-recipe iced tea and chocolate chip cookies are served in the lobby each afternoon.

HOLIDAY INN SOUTH BEACH
2201 Collins Avenue
☎ 305-534-1511 or 800-356-6902
www.holidayinnsouthbeach.com
Moderate-Expensive

A great location just a few steps from Ocean Drive, Lincoln Road, the Jackie Gleason Theater and the Miami Beach Convention Center puts the Holiday Inn South Beach right where the action is. Recent renovations have upgraded all public areas and rooms with an Art Deco style that blends into the ambience of South Beach. Amenities include cable TV, in-room movies, coffee/tea maker, work desk, radio, alarm clock, safe, hair dryer, separate closet, and phone with dataport and voice mail. An enhanced fitness center features the Life Cycle 9000, while a game room, Jacuzzi, and watersports also help guests unwind. Additional amenities include a barber shop and beauty salon, an on-site Eckerd Drug Store, a travel agency, two restaurants and a large souvenir shop.

HOTEL IMPALA
1228 Collins Avenue
Miami Beach FL 33139
☎ 305-673-2021 or 800-646-7252
www.hotelimpalamiamibeach.com
Expensive

Summer specials are available at the Hotel Impala.

Offering European-style service in the heart of South Beach, this small but stylish hotel offers valet parking, oversized baths and showers, in-room stereo and CD systems, a multi-lingual staff and 24-hour concierge service to enhance your stay.

THE KENT
1131 Collins Avenue
☎ 305-604-5068 or 800-OUTPOST
www.islandoutpost.com
Moderate-Expensive

A restored Art Deco gem, the 54-room Kent recalls the tropical glamour of the 1930s with rattan and mahogany furnishings, batik fabrics, classic terrazzo floors and a lush garden for relaxation or private parties. An African-decorated coffee cart in the lobby provides fresh morning coffee and pastries, and all rooms have fully stocked mini-bars, cable TV, and phones with voice mail, as well as access to the hotel concierge, valet parking, dry cleaning and laundry. The family-friendly Kent allows small pets, and has a baby sitter available.

LESLIE
1244 Ocean Drive
☎ 305-604-5000
Moderate-Deluxe

This landmark beachfront Art Deco hotel, used as a location in the hit movie The Birdcage, was in the process of being sold and renovated at press time. Check with the hotel for updated information.

LOEWS MIAMI BEACH HOTEL
1601 Collins Avenue
☎ 305-604-1601 or (800) 23-LOEWS
www.loewshotels.com
Expensive-Deluxe

When it opened in December 1998, the 800-room Loews Miami Beach Hotel was the first luxury convention hotel to be built on Miami Beach in 30 years. The Loews combines the romantic rooms of the newly restored landmark St. Moritz Hotel with a 700-

room tower extension. Located right on the beach and four blocks from the Miami Beach Convention Center, its blend of the tropical touches of Florida with the new Miami Beach spirit brings a cool classicism to the heart of South Beach. The hotel has 85,000 square feet of flexible meeting and banquet space, including the 28,000-square-foot Americana Ballroom, where floor-to-ceiling windows overlook spectacular ocean views.

Guest rooms combine the relaxed look of wicker with shots of tropical color for a true Florida feel. The public spaces within the hotel draw on the dramatic designs of great estates, with materials like coral stone, wood panels and wrought iron used throughout. There are six restaurants and lounges offering diverse food and beverage options. Most distinctive is the Gaucho Room, an Argentinean-style steakhouse serving prime aged meats and Argentine cuts, as well as local seafood and South American specialties against a backdrop of cowhide upholstery, dark wood finishes, and the atmosphere of the historic estates of Argentina.

THE MARLIN
1200 Collins Avenue
☎ 305-531-8800 or 800-OUTPOST
www.islandoutpost.com
Expensive-Deluxe

The Cavalier, the Casa Grande, the Kent, the Marlin and the Tides are owned by Island Outpost, which also has properties in Jamaica and the Bahamas.

Called the "rock 'n roll hotel" of South Beach because it is the home of South Beach Studios – a soundproofed, 64-channel recording and mixing facility – the Marlin has hosted such stars as Mick Jagger, Oliver Stone, Johnny Depp, Aerosmith and U2. And when not watching for visiting celebrities, guests can enjoy the passing parade of models at the Elite Modeling Agency on the second floor. The hotel's

original 1930s Art Deco look has been refurbished in Afro-urban style, with deep earth tones, hardwood floors and stainless steel accents. Additionally, each room has unique design accents of its own, like the exercise equipment in Suite 206, or the round bed and Moroccan decor of Suite 205.

Aerosmith and U2 have mixed albums in the Marlin's on-site recording studio.

Room amenities include a dedicated e-mail address, fax and printer capability, a Web TV, modem access, and two-line cordless phones. Kitchens include fully stocked refrigerators with everything from ice cream to champagne, and, a Florida specialty, a basket of fresh oranges complete with juicer. Massage and aromatherapy are offered in-room or in Suite 310, where acupuncture is also offered. Room service, secretarial services, baby-sitters and on-call doctors are available. The Marlin bar in the lobby serves Jamaican snacks and tropical drinks.

MIAMI BEACH MARRIOTT
161 Ocean Drive
☎ 305-536-7700 or 800-228-9290
Expensive-Deluxe

All the excitement of a grand opening surrounds the newest luxury beachfront hotel, the 236-room Miami Beach Marriott, which opened October 1, 2000. Located on what was the last remaining oceanfront lot on Ocean Drive, this new hotel has a recurring theme: Art Deco glamour meets Millennium sophistication. The Miami Beach Marriott offers an array of recreational activities, including an outdoor pool overlooking the beach, parasailing, a health club, sauna and whirlpool, beach cabanas, bicycles, snorkeling, and nearby golf and tennis. Rooms have balconies with magnificent views, cable TV, two-line telephones, dataport, hair dryers, in-room coffee makers and in-room safes.

NATIONAL HOTEL
1677 Collins Avenue
☎ 305-532-2311 or 800-327-8370
www.nationalhotel.com
Expensive-Deluxe

Harrison Ford, Kristen Scott Thomas, Ricky Martin and Whitney Houston have all been captured on film at the National.

Talk about accolades – the National Hotel has won the prestigious Hall of Fame Award from the Miami Design Preservation League, the Dade Heritage Trust's Award for Excellence in Art Deco Preservation, and the City of Miami Beach's Beautification Award. Opened in 1940, the National was the grandest luxury resort on Miami Beach, designed by one of the leading Art Deco architects, Roy France. The new owners have painstakingly restored its charm and style with wonderful attention to detail, and modernized it with exquisite touches. Many original furnishings and designs may be seen throughout, including the hotel's distinctive "infinity" pool, which stretches 203 feet between the hotel terrace and the beach.

In addition to the hotel's charming atmosphere, a European management team of highly trained professionals provides first-class service. Accommodations include poolside rooms and one- and two-bedroom oceanfront suites, and the hotel has two restaurants. The National enjoys a prime location right on the beach, within easy walking distance of the convention center and Lincoln Road.

RITZ-CARLTON SOUTH BEACH
Lincoln Road at Collins Avenue
☎ 305-648-5900 or 800-241-3333
Rates to be announced

Due to open in August, 2001, this newly renovated and expanded oceanfront hotel will occupy the site of the former DiLido Beach Resort, an Art Moderne

property from the early '50s. A lavish 13,000-square-foot spa, an outdoor pool, and 84 three-story poolside cabanas in the style of early Miami Beach are planned. In addition, 375 rooms and suites will be decorated in the bright colors and rich fabrics that typify the Art Moderne style. For an added layer of luxury, additional amenities and privacy will be available via a specially coded key at the Ritz-Carlton Club level. Food and beverage options will include The Café with outdoor terrace and private dining room, and a pool bar, while meetings and conventions will be served by 20,000 square feet of meeting space.

THE PARK CENTRAL
640 Ocean Drive
☎ 305-538-1611 or 800-727-5326
www.theparkcentral.com
Moderate-Expensive

The Park Central was one of the first hotels to be restored in the South Beach Art Deco district.

Built in 1937 as one of the largest hotels on Ocean Drive, the Park Central Hotel was a favored beachside rendezvous spot for such Hollywood stars as Clark Gable, Carole Lombard and Rita Hayworth. Today's visitor will be struck by its casual sense of sophistication, from the pastel façade and vintage photographic prints adorning the walls to the period furnishings that grace its rooms and suites – a feat of restoration that earned an award from the Miami Design Preservation League in 1988. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has placed the Park Central on its list of Historic Hotels of America. Rooms are equipped with cable TV, refrigerators, safes and international direct-dial phones. Another unique feature of the Park Central are the ground-floor "studio rooms," providing facilities for photographers, movie crews and models.

RITZ PLAZA HOTEL
1701 Collins Avenue
☎ 305-534-3500 or 800-522-6400
www.ritzplaza.com
Moderate-Expensive

In 1990, the Miami Design Preservation League presented the Ritz Plaza with an award for Distinguished Contribution to the Art Deco District.

Combining classic elegance with Deco-style details, the sleek white façade of the Ritz Plaza towers over the deep blues and greens of palms and swimming pool. Trappings of today include all the amenities of a modern hotel touched with tropical magic. Accommodations include standard and city-view rooms with cable TV, coffee maker, and phone with dataport and voice mail. Located on the ocean, the Ritz Plaza is a block from Lincoln Road and two blocks from Ocean Drive.

RONEY PALACE RESORT AND SPA
2399 Collins Avenue
☎ 305-604-1000 or 888-531-8815
www.roneypalace.com
Expensive-Deluxe

The Roney is a classic oceanfront destination that recently completed a multi-million-dollar renovation, and is within walking distance of the Miami Beach Convention Center and Lincoln Road. Beach lovers can enjoy 600 feet of golden sands, a private beach club, a new indoor-outdoor café and an oceanfront bar & grill. A tropically landscaped fantasy pool is surrounded by a vast deck, and poolside food and beverage service are offered.

The Roney Palace's 10,000-sq.-ft. fitness center offers custom-made workout equipment, indoor and outdoor workout areas, aerobics classes and massage treatment facilities.

Accommodations at the Roney are luxurious one- and two-bedroom suites, making it the largest all-suite resort on Miami Beach. The Roney also features 30,000 square feet of executive meeting, conference and banquet space, junior and grand ballrooms.

SHELBORNE BEACH RESORT
1801 Collins Avenue
☎ 305-531-1271 or 800-327-8757
www.shelborne.com
Moderate-Deluxe

Conveniently located in the midst of South Beach's Art Deco district, the Shelborne offers vintage Art Deco style with all the modern comforts. Facing a broad sweeping view of the Atlantic and a breath-taking oceanfront pool are 200 newly restored guest rooms, each with its own style, from rustic country to sleek modern. Rooms include cable TV and kitchenettes, and some have oceanfront terraces. The hotel also offers one- and two-bedroom poolside townhomes with full kitchens, laundry facilities, premium cable channels and walk-in closet.

A wide white-sand beach, a rooftop fitness center, and an intimate lobby lounge invite guests to relax and unwind. The Terrace Café presents award-winning Chef Pablo Dominguez and his gourmet specialties, and the sun-and-shade poolside bar offers beer, wine or cocktails served with fresh ocean breezes.

SURFCOMBER HAMPTON INN
1717 Collins Avenue
☎ 305-532-7715 or (800) HAMPTON
Expensive

Boasting 200 feet of oceanfront and a location on South Beach's doorstep one block from the Miami Beach Convention Center, the Surfcomber is modern and nostalgic at the same time, with Art Deco touches restored to perfection and an oasis of lush landscaping. Amenities include a large pool surrounded by palm trees, a pool bar and grill, and complimentary deluxe breakfast served on the pool

patio. The 185 guest rooms are decorated with warm, amber wood furnishings and feature coffee makers, dual-line telephones and cable TV with free movie channel.

In order to meet the increasing demands of Miami Beach's film, tourism and convention business, the hotel offers upgraded meeting space as well as on-site movie production facilities.

THE TIDES
1220 Ocean Drive
☎ 305-604-5070 or 800-OUTPOST
www.islandoutpost.com
Deluxe

When it opened in 1936, the 10-story Tides was the tallest and most elegant hotel on Ocean Drive.

All rooms and suites have spectacular ocean views at the four-diamond Tides, which faces Lummus Park and the Atlantic Ocean. This striking property is completely contemporary, sedate and sumptuous. The hotel's original 115 rooms were reconfigured to create 45 spacious rooms and suites, complete with king- or queen-size beds, cable TV, lines for fax/modems, custom-stocked mini-bars, plush bath robes, Aveda bath products, and a telescope to better enjoy the stunning surroundings.

A freshwater pool with a poolside bar, an outdoor exercise area, meeting space, and a gift shop are available. The **Terrace Restaurant** on the hotel's front porch offers al fresco dining and people-watching overlooking trendy Ocean Drive for breakfast, lunch and dinner. For fine dining, the Tides houses the acclaimed **1220 at The Tides** (see *Best Places to Eat*, page 210).

Miami Beach

BAY HARBOR INN AND SUITES
9660 East Bay Harbor Drive
☎ 305-868-4141
www.bayharborinn.com
Moderate-Expensive

This award-winning waterfront inn is located on scenic Indian Creek in the posh seaside enclave of Bal Harbour. Offering tranquil, luxurious waterfront accommodations, with the world-famous Bal Harbour Shops just a block away, the hotel also features the **Islands Café** for waterside cuisine, and a complimentary Continental breakfast buffet. Waterside banquet and meeting facilities are available.

BEACH HOUSE BAL HARBOUR
9449 Collins Avenue
☎ 305-535-8600 or 877-RUBELLS
Expensive-Deluxe

Newly renovated and re-designed by Rubell Hotels as the "ideal summer home," the public spaces of the Beach House are divided into a series of intimate home-like environments, from the screened-in porch furnished with wicker antiques to the **Seahorse Bar** with its giant aquarium housing 200 seahorses, many species of which are endangered. The **Atlantic**, a 200-seat indoor/outdoor oceanfront dining room, serves fine food; **The Pantry**, inspired by an old-time general store, sells sundries and snacks. Outdoors is a private beach with a picturesque hammock grove, an ocean-themed topiary garden, tented oceanfront ballroom and heated pool surrounded by date palms. Inside, each guest room is designed to make guests feel at home, with in-room movies, a Sony Play Station, cable Internet access and CD

Originally opened in the '50s, the Beach House Bal Harbour's new look was conceived by POLO Ralph Lauren interior designer Scott Sanders.

players. And all this low-key luxury and relaxation is just around the corner from the famous Bal Harbour Shops.

EDEN ROC RESORT AND SPA
4525 Collins Avenue
☎ 305-531-0000 or 800-327-8337
www.edenrocresort.com
Moderate-Deluxe

Designed by the same architect who created the Fontainebleau, the Eden Roc was completed in 1956 and attracted a steady stream of celebrities, including Elizabeth Taylor, Lucille Ball and Sammy Davis, Jr.

A legendary landmark on Miami Beach, the Eden Roc combines classic elegance and style with today's amenities, service and pleasures. After a multi-million-dollar renovation that included an enormous oceanfront spa, two new restaurants, and a state-of-the-art conference center, the Eden Roc is once again setting standards among premier resort destinations. The **Spa of Eden** features a glass-enclosed weight room overlooking both pools and the ocean, computerized treadmills, a daily aerobics class and a full range of body treatments. The spa's **Sports Club** includes Mt. Eden Roc, a rock-climbing wall, as well as squash and racquetball. Two outstanding restaurants beckon. The formal and romantic choice is **Fresco**, a glamorous setting for fine dining; for less formal occasions, **Jimmy Johnson's Three-Rings Bar and Grill** is a lively sports emporium filled with fun, Floribbean cuisine and full drinks.

Watersports are everywhere – two heated pools, windsurfing, scuba diving, and every kind of sports equipment, including fishing and diving gear, even chartered yachts. Rooms are newly decorated in a rainbow of teal, lime and violet shades, with Italian marble baths. Several one- and two-bedroom penthouse suites are available, with spectacular wrap-around balconies, big-screen satellite TV and whirlpool tubs. All accommodations feature magnificent

ocean and/or bay views. Well-equipped meeting rooms offer the latest technology and professional staffing, along with modem, fax machine, typing and computer services.

FONTAINEBLEAU HILTON RESORT & TOWERS
4441 Collins Avenue
☎ 305-538-2000 or 800-548-8886
www.fontainebleau.hilton.com
Expensive-Deluxe

The famous Fontainebleau, which has been setting a new standard for elegance since its 1954 opening, is now the 1,206-room Fontainebleau Hilton and Towers. The Fontainebleau is truly one of the "grand dames" of Miami Beach. Generations of vacationers have measured the value of any hotel location by asking, "How far is it from the Fontainebleau?" The famed white crescent of the Fontainebleau, with its 1,200 feet of beachfront, and its 20 lush tropical acres, offers spacious rooms, some with sweeping terraces, and all with breathtaking views. The magnificent outdoor setting includes a half-acre lagoon-style rock grotto pool with cascading waterfalls, surrounded by jungle greenery. Sports are as exciting as the surroundings, and include windsurfing, parasailing and tennis, and there are programs available for kids of all ages. A recent addition is a water-themed playland, the "World's Largest Octopus," with sprays, splashes, slides and a new pool with the emphasis on family fun.

The Fontainebleau is constantly upgrading and adding new amenities. Within the past five years, the hotel added a new tower hotel-within-a-hotel with its own entrance, private registration and exceptional amenities. Recent improvements included the

renovation of all rooms in the Chateau and Normandie buildings as well as a refurbishment of suites in the Versailles building. In addition, an extensive redesign of the hotel's full-service fitness center and spa has added state-of-the-art equipment and a host of classes, including spinning, power walking and box aerobics. The hotel is also developing a new restaurant offering Mediterranean dining blended with the flavors of South Florida.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

James Bond's *Goldfinger*, Jerry Lewis' *The Bellboy*, Frank Sinatra's *Tony Roma*, and Al Pacino's *Scarface* were all filmed – in part or in whole – at the Fontainebleau, as were Whitney Houston's *The Bodyguard*, Sylvester Stallone's *The Specialist*, and the recent Billy Crystal/Robert De Niro hit, *Analyze This*. Among the celebrities who have stayed or performed at the hotel through the years are Elvis Presley, Bob Hope, Tony Bennett and Liberace.

INDIAN CREEK HOTEL
2727 Indian Creek Drive
☎ 305-531-2727 or 800-491-2772
www.indiancreekhotelmb.com
Moderate-Expensive

A unique hotel that blends the charm of a European hostelry with the tropical grace of a Key West guest house, the Indian Creek overlooks its namesake waterway, and is just one block from the beach and

boardwalk. Built in 1936, this beautifully restored hotel features vintage Norman Bel Geddes-designed furniture and sepia photographs of Miami Beach during its 1930s heyday. Done with Southwestern overtones, the hotel is a masterpiece of "Pueblo Deco" architecture; sumptuous warmth captures the look and feel of another era. The homey atmosphere has up-to-the-minute amenities and guests are greeted with fresh flowers and a welcoming bottle of wine. A spacious garden with lush tropical landscaping adjoins a sparkling pool, and fantastic food is served at its itsy-bitsy bistro, the **Indian Creek Café Paradiso**, a masterpiece of old-fashioned Tuscan atmosphere and hospitality. Accommodations include 61 rooms and suites with remote-control TV, desks and deluxe toiletries.

OCEAN SURF HOTEL
7436 Ocean Terrace
☎ 305-866-1648 or 800-555-0411
www.oceansurf.com
Inexpensive-Moderate

The beachfront Ocean Surf, although well to the north of South Beach, is a charming boutique-style Art Deco hotel, incorporating such traditional elements as nautical design features, large round windows, angular building forms, stepped-back façades and vertical accenting. Elaborate designs embossed in brass embellish the original elevator door and cab. The unique compactness and charming scale of this pleasant oceanside resort remains intact after its complete modernization. Restored in 1997, the 49 rooms offer all modern conveniences such as compact refrigerators, room safes and cable TV. Families are welcome, and will enjoy the free Continental breakfasts.

RADISSON DEAUVILLE RESORT
6701 Collins Avenue
☎ 305-865-8511 or 800-333-3333
www.radisson.com
Moderate-Expensive

In its former incarnation as the Deauville Resort, this hotel hosted Hollywood high-rollers such as Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., and the Beatles. Today it has been modernized and restored to the glory of its heyday, with all rooms newly decorated and supplied with mini-refrigerators, coffee makers, voice mail and dataports. A 700-foot private beach, a heated spa and Jacuzzi, state-of-the-art health and exercise club, and three all-weather tennis courts are among the recreational facilities, with special activity programs for children.

SHERATON BAL HARBOUR BEACH RESORT
9701 Collins Avenue
☎ 305-865-7511 or 800-325-3535
www.sheraton.com
Moderate-Deluxe

A luxurious oceanfront location in toney Bal Harbour, the Sheraton presents first-class accommodations in 642 guest rooms, including 27 suites and 26 newly renovated garden villa suites. In-room amenities include voice mail and dataport, mini-bar and coffee maker, and video check-out. Outdoor recreation features a spectacular water fantasy pool with waterfalls, water-slide, lap pool, kiddie pool and Jacuzzi. A fitness club keeps guests relaxed, 52,000 square feet of space keeps meetings comfortably accommodated, and the world-famous Bal Harbour Shops are directly across the street.

WYNDHAM MIAMI BEACH RESORT
4833 Collins Avenue
☎ 305-532-3600 or 800-WYNDHAM
www.wyndham.com
Moderate-Deluxe

Housed in an 18-story glass tower surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean and Intracoastal Waterway, each of the 420 rooms boasts a stunning view. Former site of the Doral Beach Resort, the Wyndham, along with the Eden Roc and Fontainebleau, is part of the area known as "Millionaire's Row," because of its history as the playground of the very rich. This beachfront property features a heated outdoor pool with poolside cabanas, a fitness center with sauna and steam room, and a beachfront **Aqua Sports Center**. Access to championship golf and tennis tempt the larger sportsmen of the family, while the smaller ones will relish the **Wyndham Kids Club** with supervised activities and fun. The personalized service and attention that is a Wyndham specialty is manifest in every detail.

Coconut Grove

MAYFAIR HOUSE HOTEL
3000 Florida Avenue
☎ 305-441-0000 or 800-433-4555
www.mayfairhousehotel.com
Expensive-Deluxe

Nestled in the heart of trendy Coconut Grove, at the center of this vibrant mecca of upscale shopping, dining and entertainment, is the one-of-a-kind Mayfair House. The atmosphere is tropical and tranquil, with fragrant orchid gardens, elegant stained glass, and antique art treasures throughout. The Mayfair features elegant suites, each with hand-carved ma-

The Mayfair House Hotel is steps away from all the action in the Grove.

hogany furnishings and enhanced by a Japanese hot tub on a private veranda or an indoor marble Roman Jacuzzi, and a fully stocked mini-bar. A rooftop pool and Jacuzzi offer splendid views of the Grove, while two ballrooms host a variety of events in luxurious style.

The **Mayfair Grill** is recognized as one of Miami's finest restaurants, delighting locals and visitors alike with a creative menu of classic and nouveau gourmet cuisine in a setting of art treasures and colorful Tiffany stained glass. And unique to South Florida is the **Orchids and Champagne Wine Bar**, a hip specialty bar featuring the largest selection of champagne and wines by the glass in a setting of Mediterranean glamour; served outdoors is the **Orchid Champagne Court**, with complimentary tapas during happy hour, and occasional Flamenco guitar.

THE MUTINY HOTEL
2951 South Bayshore Drive
☎ 305-441-2100 or 888-868-8469
www.mutinyhotel.com
Deluxe

The Mutiny Hotel has long been one of Coconut Grove's most famous landmarks, and following a year-long renovation has re-opened as the area's hottest all-suite luxury hotel. Always a playground for the rich and famous, the Mutiny once again offers lavish lifestyles and deluxe accommodations, with spectacular views of Sailboat Bay, Peacock Park, and the glittering Miami skyline. Each suite is designed in a British Colonial motif, with king-size beds, floor-to-ceiling windows, and marble floors. Penthouses have wrap-around balconies with stunning views of the bay, and a private rooftop solarium

includes an inviting hot tub. Business travelers will appreciate suites that are fully appointed with fax, copier and printer, speaker phones, writing desk, VCR, dataports, and two televisions. When the business of the day is over, a health club and pool area beckon.

The Mutiny can organize vacation and recreational packages for discriminating guests who seek such unusual alternatives as a private catered dinner aboard a blimp for a bird's-eye glimpse of majestic Miami at night; a view from the water as a captain sails guests around the bay in a private sailboat, docking for a gourmet lunch on a private island; a ride in a limo to the Dolphin Research Institute in the Keys for a swim with the dolphins; or visits to local attractions like Metrozoo or the Miami Seaquarium.

RITZ-CARLTON COCONUT GROVE
2700 Tigertail Avenue
☎ 305-648-5900
Rates to be announced

The Ritz-Carlton Key Biscayne is scheduled to open in 2001.

The boutique-style Ritz-Carlton Coconut Grove will feature 115 rooms and suites, an outdoor swimming pool, fully equipped fitness center and guestrooms with such amenities as high-speed Internet access, dual phone lines and dataport connections. The Club Level will provide a number of premium amenities, including light fare refreshments throughout the day. Restaurants and lounges will include a cigar bar.

WYNDHAM GRAND BAY
2669 South Bayshore Drive
☎ 305-858-9600 or 800-WYNDHAM
www.wyndham.com
Expensive-Deluxe

Known for its lavish surroundings and original works of art, the four-star, four-diamond Wyndham Grand Bay offers a luxurious European ambience in exclusive Coconut Grove. The pyramid-like shape of the Grand Bay Hotel has symbolized upscale accommodations and top-quality service for many years. Now owned by Wyndham Hotels, the property has undergone an $8 million renovation, and presents 177 deluxe oversized guestrooms, including 46 suites, with views of Biscayne Bay. All rooms are equipped with cable TV, in-room movies, fax machine, Internet access, hair dryer and safe. The Wyndham tropical courtyard pool and whirlpool spa adjoins a fitness center with sauna and exercise equipment. Recreational amenities include golf, tennis and deep-sea fishing. Northern Italian cuisine is served at **Bice** (see *Best Places to Eat*, page 216), an elegantly casual setting open for breakfast, brunch, lunch and dinner. The **Bice Bar**, the **Wine Room**, **Poolside Bar & Grill** and **Lobby Terrace** all feature award-winning specialties. Afternoon tea is served in the lobby lounge and there is live music in the evenings.

Key Biscayne

RITZ-CARLTON KEY BISCAYNE
415 Grand Bay Drive
☎ 305-648-5900
www.ritzcarlton.com
Rates to be announced

Due to open in spring 2001, along with the Ritz-Carlton Coconut Grove, the 350-room Ritz-Carlton Key Biscayne will boast an oceanfront location in the exclusive Grand Bay area of Key Biscayne, offering such luxury amenities as a European-style spa, world-class tennis center and the Ritz-Carlton Club Level with private lounge and concierge. Recreation will include fishing, boating and windsurfing, with dining options including two restaurants, a pool bar and grill and 24-hour room service.

SONESTA BEACH RESORT
350 Ocean Drive
☎ 305-361-2021 or 800-SONESTA
www.sonesta.com
Moderate-Deluxe

The Sonesta Beach Resort, which underwent a complete renovation in 1993, takes full advantage of its delightful Key Biscayne location. Set on a wide, white sand beach, open to the warm Atlantic breezes, the eight-story Inca-style structure stands majestically at the water's edge, and towers over the lush tropical landscape. Each of the luxurious guest rooms has a private balcony with a spectacular view of either ocean or island. The heated Olympic-size swimming pool overlooks soft sands and the rolling Atlantic. For more private getaways, there are fully furnished three- and four-bedroom vacation homes with private pools, adjacent to the main hotel.

Swimmers may enjoy the Sonesta Beach's "must-try" piña colada at the casual outdoor Seabreeze and Seagrape bars.

Two whirlpool spas, a fitness center, and a complimentary "Just Us Kids" program are also featured. Fine dining in the resort's signature **Purple Dolphin Restaurant** serves up continental cuisine overlooking the water. And the nights come alive in the elegant **Desires Lounge**, with dancing to the latest sounds. Sonesta's shuttle service provides complimentary transportation to Miami's main shopping districts and attractions, and airport transfers may be arranged.

Coral Gables

THE BILTMORE HOTEL
1200 Anastasia Avenue
☎ 305-445-1926 or 800-727-1926
www.biltmorehotel.com
Moderate-Deluxe

The Biltmore's centerpiece, the 15-story copper-clad tower, is modeled after the famed Giralda Tower in Seville, Spain.

A National Historic Landmark, the 315-foot tower of the Biltmore Hotel overlooks the tree-lined streets of Coral Gables. Old-World charm is the keynote of this four-star/four-diamond luxury establishment. In keeping with the style of Coral Gables, the Biltmore's design is Mediterranean-revival, with open-air courtyards, large stone columns, and marble floors.

Opened in 1926, the Biltmore has hosted royalty, the famous and the infamous, and the social elite. Converted into a hospital during World War II, the hotel was later unoccupied, until new owners refurbished and re-opened it in 1992. The opulently restored 1920s-era lobby with hand-painted ceilings and Romanesque columns leads into a hotel with new lighting, new phone and computer systems, renovated guestrooms, and convention facilities in

palatial surroundings. The hotel overlooks an 18-hole golf course, and offers tennis, a spa, and a fitness center. To better serve its business guests, the Biltmore has transformed its country club into the 40,000 square-foot Conference Center of the Americas.

Continuing its tradition for elegance, the Biltmore recently introduced an upscale French restaurant, **La Palme d'Or** (see *Best Places to Eat*, page 228), bringing modern French cuisine and the talents of Michelin-rated chefs to Coral Gables. Gourmet meals are complemented by an extensive array of French wines, in the grand tradition of Europe's finest hotels.

BILTMORE HISTORY

In 1924, George Merrick joined forces with Biltmore Hotel magnate John McEntee Bowman at the height of the Florida land boom to build a hotel in grand style; their vision was realized 10 months and $10 million later in the Biltmore Hotel.

The Biltmore's pool is the largest hotel pool in the US, and has been called one of the most beautiful in the world.

HOTEL PLACE ST. MICHEL
162 Alcazar Avenue
☎ 305-444-1666
www.hotelplacestmichel.com
Moderate

Recently renovated, this is a beautifully restored European-style hotel. No two rooms are quite alike; all are decorated with antiques, and feature cable TV and business telephones. The Hotel Place St. Michel, built in 1926, evokes the atmosphere of the historic Mediterranean, and is included in the prestigious Zagat survey. Award-winning dining is of-

fered at the **Restaurant St. Michel** with nightly piano music, and light fare is available at the casual **Charcuterie St. Michel**. A sophisticated stop for cocktails is **Stuart's Bar & Lounge**, and there is a complimentary Continental breakfast, Florida fruit basket, and newspaper delivered to the room.

HOLIDAY INN UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
1350 South Dixie Highway
☎ 305-667-5611 or 800-HOLIDAY
Inexpensive-Moderate

Directly across the street from the University of Miami, this is the most convenient hotel for anyone visiting a student or just checking out the school. It has been newly remodeled with sophisticated European lobby decor contrasted with lush tropical landscaping in the pool area. The comfortable guest rooms feature cable TV and coffee machines. This hotel has a three-meals-a day restaurant, and a lively pub-style sports lounge that draws the college crowd. The Metrorail station across the street provides easy transportation to Dadeland Mall, Shops at Sunset Place, Downtown Miami, Civic Center and Hialeah.

HYATT REGENCY CORAL GABLES
50 Alhambra Plaza
☎ 305-441-1234 or 800-233-1234
www.hyatt.com
Moderate-Deluxe

Part of The Alhambra, a mixed use hotel/office complex, the Hyatt Regency Coral Gables has an elegant Spanish touch. With delicate design inspired by the famous Alhambra Palace in Spain, the mood of Moorish-Mediterranean echoes throughout the 13-story hotel. Guest rooms are appointed with luxurious furnishings and offer spacious living areas. Non-

smoking and handicapped-accessible rooms are available, and several rooms and suites offer private balconies and terraces. Rooms have cable TV with HBO, refrigerated mini-bars with snacks, soft drinks and liquors, and daily delivery of the morning paper. There is on-site dining, a night club, a pool and fitness center, and meeting space.

OMNI COLONNADE HOTEL
180 Aragon Avenue
☎ 305-441-2600 or 800-THE-OMNI
www.omnihotels.com
Expensive-Deluxe

Recognized by *Condé Nast Traveler* as one of the top 500 hotels in the world, the Omni Colonnade is an elegant hotel in the grand European style. A palatial old-world ambience is created by handcrafted materials and traditional elegance, but this is a state-of-the-art facility with 140 oversized rooms, 17 bi-level suites, color TV, an exercise room, sauna, whirlpool and rooftop swimming pool. In addition to 24-hour room service, guests can meet and eat at **Doc Dammers** restaurant and lounge with its casual atmosphere reminiscent of 1920s Florida. The Omni is located on Miracle Mile in downtown Coral Gables, an easy walk to some of the best restaurants, fine retail stores, art galleries and theaters.

The Omni's cornerstone feature, the Rotunda, was originally built in 1926 by Coral Gables pioneer George Merrick and once served as a sales office for the city.

Airport Area

DORAL GOLF RESORT AND SPA
4400 NW 87th Avenue
☎ 305-592-2000 or 800-71-DORAL
www.doralgolf.com
Moderate-Deluxe

The Doral Resort is the home of world-renowned golf courses and a stellar spa.

One of America's leading golf resorts, Doral is known nationwide for its peerless golf courses. The famous **Blue Monster** course is the site of the Genuity Championship (formerly the Doral-Ryder Open), and has tried the skills of golfing greats from Arnold Palmer to Tiger Woods. The newest golf attraction is the Greg Norman **Great White** course, the first "desert-scape" golf course in the Southeastern US, with daring and distinctive challenges. The Great White features a landscape of tightly packed coquina sand accented with Florida palm trees, and a series of pot bunkers that are characteristic of the courses Norman played while growing up in Australia.

Doral also has world-class tennis facilities at the renowned **Arthur Ashe Tennis Center**, offering both hard and clay surfaces as well as expert instruction. Doral has also established itself as a family destination with the recent opening of a spectacular water playground, The Blue Lagoon, featuring a marina with four pools, cascading waterfalls, a diving pool, a serpentine pool with a rock façade, and a tad pool for the little ones, all fueled by the Great White Falls, a 36-foot waterfall. The Blue Lagoon also houses Camp Doral, with age-appropriate programming and a wide range of activities for the younger guests.

Adults can relax and be pampered at the award-winning Spa at Doral Golf Resort, adjacent to the main

resort and reminiscent of the country villas that dot the hillsides of Tuscany. Facilities include a gourmet restaurant, indoor and outdoor pools, massage rooms, hydrotherapy tubs, Swiss-style showers, a full service beauty salon and three fitness studios.

Doral features 693 newly renovated guestrooms with oversized balconies, more than 40 meeting areas including two grand ballrooms and great dining at three restaurants. Just a few miles west of Miami International Airport, Doral is easily accessible from major highways, and you don't have to stay there to play there – golf or spa day packages are available.

HILTON MIAMI AIRPORT AND TOWERS
5101 Blue Lagoon Drive
☎ 305-262-1000 or 800-HILTONS
www.hilton.com
Moderate

The Hilton Miami Airport and Towers is a unique hotel, combining airport convenience and business-oriented features with resort recreation. Situated on a private peninsula in the heart of Blue Lagoon, a 100-acre freshwater lake, the hotel features 30,000 square feet of meeting space along with such professional services as computer work station rentals, mobile computer stations, video conferencing, lap top and LCD display rentals, and more. All 500 luxuriously decorated rooms and suites have panoramic views of Blue Lagoon or the Miami skyline, along with refreshment centers, dataports, voice mail and on-command TV systems. The top three floors contain "The Towers," providing upgraded accommodations and amenities. Resort features include three tennis courts, an outdoor pool and Jacuzzi, a round-the-clock fitness center and two

fine-dining restaurants. For after-hours fun, **Club Mystique at the Hilton** has been voted the #1 Salsa club in Miami.

MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT HOTEL
Located at MIA
☎ 305-871-4100 or 800-327-1276
www.miahotel.com
Moderate

Special rates for long layovers are available at Miami International Airport Hotel from 9 am to 6 pm.

It couldn't get any more convenient than this – located in the center of the airport terminal, Miami International Airport Hotel is literally minutes away from all departing and arriving flights. Super-soundproofing in the 260 rooms and suites keeps all of the clamor away; the rooms are newly renovated, elegantly appointed and ultra-modern. Amenities include a fine restaurant, sophisticated lobby bar, a health spa, steam and sauna room. A soothing rooftop pool surrounded by tropical trees is a reminder that, yes, you *are* in Miami now.

QUALITY INN AND SUITES
MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
2373 NW LeJeune Road
☎ 305-871-3230 or 800-666-0668
www.choicehotels.com
Inexpensive

An affordable alternative less than one mile from the airport, the Quality Inn features 180 tastefully decorated rooms and suites, all renovated about two years ago. Complimentary 24-hour transportation to and from the airport is provided, and the game room is also open 24 hours, to accommodate the most unpredictable airline scheduling. Tired travelers are pampered with a food court on the terrace, an outdoor pool with landscaped deck, a fitness center,

daily room service, and in-room coffee provided free of charge.

SUMMERFIELD SUITES HOTEL MIAMI AIRPORT
5710 Blue Lagoon Drive
☎ 305-269-1922 or 800-833-4353
www.summerfieldsuites.com
Moderate

This is the airport area's new all-suite hotel. One-bedroom and two-bedroom/two-bath suites are available featuring separate bedrooms with a private bath, TV and phone lines, spacious living room with videocassette player, and fully equipped kitchen. A complimentary breakfast buffet is served daily. There is a pool, whirlpool and exercise room, and facilities for small meetings.

The Everglades

FLAMINGO LODGE MARINA & OUTPOST RESORT
#1 Flamingo Lodge Highway
Everglades National Park
☎ 941-695-3101
www.flamingolodge.com
Inexpensive-Moderate

Flamingo Lodge is the only hotel in Everglades National Park.

On the north shore of Florida Bay sits Flamingo Lodge, Marina and Outpost Resort, another completely unique vacation spot, with 103 lodge rooms and 24 cottages, with kitchens equipped with the comforts of home in an area of unforgettable adventures. Resort amenities include an outdoor swimming pool, a restaurant and lounge, fuel service, convenience store, gift shop, and full service marina,

including boat tours, boat rentals and fishing charters. Some services vary seasonally.

The biggest attraction, of course, is the surrounding 1.5 million acres of subtropical wilderness known as Everglades National Park, one of the country's largest parks and a treasure of biological diversity.

Flamingo Lodge is located about an hour south of the Miami metropolitan area. From Miami, take the Turnpike extension until it merges with US-1 in Florida City. Turn right at the first traffic light onto Palm Drive (State Road 9336/SW 344th Street) and follow the signs to the park.

THE IVEY HOUSE
107 Camellia Street
Everglades City
☎ 941-695-3299
www.iveyhouse.com
Inexpensive-Moderate

This quaint bed-and-breakfast inn is located in Everglades City, a small, historic fishing village on the northwest boundary of Everglades National Park. Accommodations are charming; boardinghouse style rooms in the main guest house share baths, showers, televisions and phones. There is also a private, two-bedroom cottage with a full kitchen and its own bath, TV, and stereo. A large dining room decorated in antiques, a living room with an Everglades resource library, and generous porches invite guests to relax and mingle.

Newly opened in January 2001 is an adjoining inn featuring rooms with two queen beds, private bathrooms, refrigerators, TVs and phones. All inn rooms overlook a screened courtyard with a "conversation pool" – a shallow pool with a seat lining the interior perimeter.

From Ivey House, you can take half-day, full-day, or overnight canoe and kayak adventures; rent bicycles, camping equipment, canoes, kayaks and skiffs; go camping; or take a guided tour aboard a power boat.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

Ivey House is a remodeled boarding house that was constructed around 1928 to house the workers building the Tamiami Trail, the roadway carved from Everglades sawgrass and swamps to link South Florida's east and west coasts.

MICCOSUKEE RESORT
& CONVENTION CENTER
500 SW 177th Avenue
Southwest Miami
☎ 305-925-2555 or 877-242-6464
www.miccosukee.com
Moderate-Expensive

The new Miccosukee Resort and Convention Center is one of the most unusual resort destinations in Florida. A brilliantly designed Art Deco-inspired hotel decorated with Native American motifs and vibrant colors, the property is situated at the edge of the scenic Everglades, just 15 minutes west of Miami on Tamiami Trail, and features 256 deluxe guest rooms, 46 suites, meeting and banquet facilities, spa services, children's programs and pools, all offered with style, sophistication and comfort.

What makes this luxury resort unlike any other, though, is its gaming hall; the hotel is on Native American property, where state gambling regulations do not apply. Guests may enjoy a 50-table poker room, video pull-tab machines, Lightning Lotto and bingo.

The Miccosukee Indian Village and Museum is 18 miles west of the resort.

This vivid Indian-themed resort also offers a variety of adventurous excursions into the surrounding Everglades, including airboat rides, and tours of a traditional Miccosukee Indian Village and nearby Shark Valley. Dining is a special treat at any of the resort's three restaurants: **Empeeke Aaweeke**, a buffet-style restaurant; **Empeeke Aya**, a delicatessen; and the signature dining room, **Empeeke Cheke**, with an intimate elegant setting. Menu items range from top quality steaks, seafood, pasta and Caribbean specialties to an array of authentic Native American dishes, including venison, frog legs, wild boar, and Indian fry bread.

Best Places to Eat

The Alive Price Scale

Our scale is based on the price of a single dinner entrée. Appetizer, salad, drinks and dessert will be extra. So will dinner side dishes, when the menu is à la carte. Unless otherwise noted, all restaurants accept major credit cards.

DINING PRICE SCALE	
Inexpensive	Entrées are $10 or less
Moderate	Entrées $10-$20
Expensive	Entrées $20-$30
Very Expensive	Entrées $30 and higher

Cuisine

If the only thing you like better than good food is *great* food, give your taste buds the kind of holiday your body is having, with the one-of-a-kind flavors of Miami cuisine. The Magic City's international flair, seaside location, and subtropical climate have inspired the creativity of avant-garde local chefs to produce unique dining experiences at a multitude of mouth-watering eateries throughout the city, in settings palatial or poolside.

TIP

Restaurant hours of operation are subject to change, so call ahead.

Seafood

Looking at a map, you can see that Florida is surrounded by the sea, so it comes as no surprise that seafood figures prominently on Florida menus. Succulent stone crabs in season are as much a Miami trademark as palm trees, and are usually eaten fresh and cold, with mustard sauce or drawn butter. Florida yellowtail is another local treat. Dolphin and

snapper from the Atlantic, shrimp from the Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean tastes such as conch and spiny lobster are additional delights from the deep. The growing number of sushi lovers will find the freshest fare imaginable among the tender cuts of fish sent directly from the ocean to Miami's many sushi bars, and the Peruvian variant, *ceviche*, with its delicate citrus overtones, is also served locally.

International Flavors

Then, of course, there are Miami's international flavors, starting with Cuban cuisine, which combines succulent dishes of beef, chicken and pork with savory black beans and exotic vegetables. The tastes of the Caribbean are represented in local Jamaican eateries, while Haitian restaurants are also gaining in popularity.

And the list goes on, spanning the continents from North and South America to Europe, Asia and Africa. The hearty cuts of meat so beloved in Argentina and Nicaragua, the noodle dishes and peanut sauces of Vietnamese and Thai cooking, the bagels spread with cream cheese and lox in local delicatessens... each culture adds its customs and cuisine to the melting-pot menu. Even the ever-popular Italian, Chinese, and down-home country cooking take on a special tropical tang in Miami. Taste and savor the flavors as you visit the world by dining in Miami. And be sure to top it all off like a native – with a shot of *café Cubano*, for an eye-opening finish to your culinary adventure.

DISTINCTIVE DINING

The signature cooking style of the city is called **New Miami World Cuisine**, a fusion of Caribbean and Latin influences. Recipes and traditions from around the Americas are brought together with the widely available tropical products such as mango, taro, and papaya, along with the supply of fresh seafood from the surrounding waters. Fine restaurants frequently pair traditional cuts of meat, chicken or fish with savory sauces and side dishes, regional starches, or exotic fruits. There is a new nationwide interest in the Miami menu, and many of the city's celebrity chefs have appeared on television or in magazines, to publicize their new cookbooks, or to share the wonderful ever-changing and dynamic cooking styles that have evolved from this bountiful blend of produce and peoples.

Local Faze vs. Chains

Among the restaurants in Greater Miami are the familiar chains you've probably dined at before – including Chili's, Bennigan's, Olive Garden, Outback Steakhouse, Hooters, Red Lobster, Cami's Seafood and Pasta, TGI Fridays, Roadhouse Grill, Denny's and IHOP, among others. With a few exceptions, restaurant chains have not been included here; instead we've concentrated on a sampling of the local eateries that define Miami's eclectic, multi-ethnic dining experience.

Fast food abounds as well, and you'll even find sushi and fresh seafood on the go in Miami. For a quick treat, however, we recommend **Pollo Tropical**, whose Caribbean-style menu features marinated roasted chicken, pork, shrimp, delicious black beans and rice, plantains and *yuca frita*.

What to Wear

In Miami restaurants, you can pretty much count on dressiness increasing with menu prices. But don't pack your tux or ballgown. The locals bow to the sultry temperatures with a look best described as ready for an outdoor party in summer. Men should have a light suit or jacket with them for upscale dining; for women, a basic black dress or linen and cotton alternative will be fine. On South Beach, where the tourists roam, you'll see everything from khaki shorts to beaded cocktail dresses in local eateries. Just find your comfort zone and dress accordingly.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

In Miami, especially on the beach or in the Grove, balmy breezes often accompany the meal. Al fresco restaurants range from casual to elegant, and live music is a frequent feature. Fine fresh-air dining is found on Miami Beach's **Lincoln Road**, an area popular with tourists as well as residents. Along picturesque **Ocean Drive**, open-air eateries overlook the beach. **Bayside Marketplac**e in downtown Miami has a number of outdoor eateries with beautiful Biscayne Bay for a backdrop. Coconut Grove offers a variety of sidewalk dining choices.

TIP

Some restaurants may automatically add gratuity for groups of five or more. Groups usually require advance reservations as well. Otherwise, listings will note when reservations are required.

Downtown Miami

BIG FISH
55 SW Miami Avenue Road
☎ 305-373-1770
Moderate-Expensive

It's not the most pastoral of settings, but the view is striking at Big Fish, tucked among the warehouses lining the Miami River downtown. While they sample fresh fish specialties, diners are treated to the sight of cargo ships lumbering up the river alongside fishing boats and luxury yachts. Menu items include the daily catch, which might be yellowtail snapper, corvina or pan-seared tuna. For hearty appetites, there's the mixed fish grill, featuring half a lobster, calamari, shrimp, tuna and swordfish, while pasta lovers will appreciate the house special, tagliatelle Big Fish, featuring lobster in its shell and a sauce flavored with shellfish bisque and truffle butter.

Appetizers include golden crab cakes served on a bed of mixed greens. Desserts are homemade and include apple tart, tiramisu and Key lime pie. If you visit for lunch, be sure to sample the famous Big Fish fish sandwich – grilled mahi-mahi. But you have to be hungry, because it's hefty.

Dining at Big Fish is mostly outdoors. Call for directions before setting out because it can be tricky to find. Open weekdays, noon-3 pm and 6:30-11 pm; Saturdays and Sundays, noon-11 pm.

BUBBA GUMP SHRIMP CO.
401 Biscayne Boulevard (Bayside Marketplace)
☎ 305-379-8866
www.bubbagump.com
Moderate

Pick up Bubba Gump souvenirs after dining, including buttons, T-shirts, coffee mugs and chocolates.

If the name Bubba Gump Shrimp Company sounds familiar, you probably heard it in the movie *Forrest Gump*; and indeed, the restaurant is themed around the movie, with shrimp the star attraction. Shrimp specials include Cajun barbecue shrimp, marinated in spicy herb seasonings; bayou scampi in white wine, garlic and butter; and Lt. Dan's drunken shrimp" in bourbon sauce with spicy New Orleans sausage. Other entrées feature mahi-mahi, baby back ribs, salmon and crab legs. For dessert, there's "Gumpberry" cobbler with blackberries, peaches and apples, and the creamy, sweet Jenny's Strawberry Dream, a concoction of pound cake, vanilla ice cream and strawberry purée.

Beer is on tap to accompany your meal, or try a specialty drink such as the Delta Sunset raspberry margarita. Outdoor patio seating lets diners take in the foot traffic at picturesque Bayside Marketplace. Open daily for lunch and dinner, 11 am-11:30 pm; 12:30 am weekends.

EAST COAST FISHERIES
330 W Flagler Street
☎ 305-372-1300
Moderate-Expensive

At press time, this popular seafood restaurant on the Miami River was closed for remodeling. But check with them when you're in town; the seafood is fresh and among the best in Miami.

EDELWEISS BAVARIAN GASTHAUS & RESTAURANT
2655 Biscayne Boulevard
☎ 305-573-4421
Moderate

You'll forget there are palm trees outside when you enter this little corner of Germany off Biscayne Boulevard, just north of downtown in the Edgewater area of Miami. A warm, Bavarian atmosphere accented by wainscoted walls and pine boughs sets the stage for a menu of hearty German and European specialties, including traditional bratwurst and schnitzel, spaetzle with fresh broccoli and red peppers, slow-cooked pot roast, and beer steak, a sirloin grilled with dark beer and horseradish. Appetizers include Camembert in honey-garlic butter and goulash with chunks of beef, red and green peppers, potato, celery, tomato and paprika. For dessert, there is – what else? – luscious strudel. Open weekdays for lunch, 11 am-2:30 pm; dinner nightly from 5 pm; closed on Sundays during the summer.

Edelweiss is housed in a former Edgewater mansion.

FISHBONE GRILLE
650 South Miami Avenue
☎ 305-530-1915
Inexpensive-Moderate

The downtown lunch rush keeps this small, storefront restaurant jumping from noon to 2 pm and again from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. Service, as you might expect, is prompt, and the menu surprisingly eclectic. Specialties include yellowfin tuna with bay shrimp, green mango and ginger salad, whole Key West yellowtail snapper on white rice and black beans, and grilled Atlantic salmon on a crisp sushi rice cake. Seafood pasta linguine and lemon chicken breast with fusilli are among the pasta dishes, along with grilled Mongolian marinated Thai tiger shrimp served with a tangy firecracker noodle salad. The menu also includes New York strip steak and a variety of salads, sandwiches and personal pizzas. Open daily except Sundays for lunch (11:30 am-4 pm) and dinner (5:30-10 pm); Fridays and Saturdays until 11 pm. Fishbone grill has another location at 1450 South Dixie Highway in Coral Gables, ☎ 305-668-3033.

HARD ROCK CAFE
401 Biscayne Boulevard (Bayside Marketplace)
☎ 305-377-3110
Inexpensive-Moderate

Scenic, busy Bayside Marketplace is the Miami setting for fun, familiar Hard Rock Café, featuring a menu of American favorites, including burgers and sandwiches, ribs, steaks, an array of appetizers and specialty drinks. Open daily for lunch and dinner, 11:30 am-11 pm, to midnight Saturdays and Sundays.

MYKONOS
1201 SW 22nd Street
☎ 305-856-3140
Inexpensive-Moderate

The flavors of the Mediterranean come out in a variety of dishes at this casual, neighborhood-style eatery. Main dishes include gyros, souvlaki, stuffed grape leaves and lamb chops, served in satisfying portions with warm pita bread. The Greek salad, loaded with feta cheese, is doused in a tangy, oily dressing. Greek appetizers, desserts and good, strong coffee complement the meal to perfection. Open Mondays-Saturdays for lunch and dinner, 11 am-10 pm; Sundays 5-10 pm.

PERRICONE'S
15 SE 10th Street
☎ 305-374-9449
Moderate

Part marketplace and deli, part café, Perricone's is popular with the downtown business crowd. It's a quick place to stop in for breakfast, as well as a casual retreat for power lunches. An extensive menu features everything from sandwiches to sirloins to seafood specialties and a variety of pasta dishes, including seven-vegetable lasagna and lobster ravioli in saffron cream sauce. Other specialties include rosemary chicken roasted on a wood-burning grill, boneless pork loin served with onion and pancetta chutney, and veal chop stuffed with porcini and ricotta. Save room for dessert, though; in addition to flan, tiramisu and cheesecake, the house chocolate cake is a to-die-for mix of chocolate mousse and chocolate cake in a chocolate ganache frosting topped with white chocolate hazelnut crunch.

And though it caters to the business crowd, there's nothing businesslike about Perricone's decor, which resembles a mountain cabin complete with wood interior and oak trees. It's not fabricated, either. The restaurant's porchfront was fashioned from a 120-year-old barn brought down from Vermont by the restaurant's owner, Steve Perricone. Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner from 7 am-10 pm, except Sundays, when they close at 5 pm.

Little Havana

LA CARRETA
3632 SW 8th Street
☎ 305-444-7501
Inexpensive

La Carreta's SW 8th Street location is open 24 hours.

With locations throughout Greater Miami, La Carreta is a great place to get your first taste of Cuban cuisine. All the staples are here, from *palomilla* steak (an ultra-thin cut, flash-fried and smothered in onions) and *lechon asado* (savory roast pork) to *pollo asado* (juicy, marinated roasted chicken) and, it seems, every sandwich under the sun. The menu is vast, and you might need some help from the friendly servers. Try a *mojito* cocktail, a tart concoction of light rum, soda water, lemon juice and mint.

The 8th Street restaurant in Little Havana is the original La Carreta and the only one open 24 hours. Other locations are at 8650 SW 40th Street (Bird Road), ☎ 305-553-8383; 5350 W 16th Avenue (Hialeah), ☎ 305-823-5200; 12 Crandon Boulevard (Key Biscayne), ☎ 305-365-1177; and 11740 N. Kendall Drive (Kendall), ☎ 305-596-5973. All are open daily for breakfast, lunch, dinner and late suppers.

ROMEO'S CAFE
2257 Coral Way
☎ 305-859-2228
Very Expensive

Get ready for a personalized dining experience at this intimate, upscale Italian restaurant. How personalized? Well, for starters, there's no menu. Seven courses are brought to your table and, if there are any objections, substitutions will be made. More than likely, your meal will include the chef's signature appetizer, carpaccio of salmon, sliced thin and flavored with lemon, olive oil, garlic and capers. From there, you'll savor a number of dishes, including pastas, eggplant, fish, chicken and lamb. A dessert of cream-filled pastries with vanilla ice cream and fresh chocolate, apricot and strawberry sauces end an evening of gastronomic delights. Due to the intimate size of the restaurant, reservations are a must, and you'll want to dress up for this one. Open daily for lunch, noon-3 pm, and dinner, 6-11 pm; midnight Fridays and Saturdays.

The menu changes frequently at Romeo's, and differs from table to table.

TAQUERIAS EL MEXICANO
521 SW 8th Street
☎ 305-858-1160
Inexpensive

Though located in the heart of Little Havana, the epicenter of Miami's Cuban community, this restaurant serves a host of tasty Mexican specialties, from chips-and-salsa starters to apple burrito desserts. Roll your own beef or chicken fajitas in soft tortillas. Other specialties include *carne asada* (thin-sliced boneless skirt steak), and pork chops, seasoned and topped with flavorful *salsa verde* (green sauce). Most entrées are served with refried beans and Mexican rice.

Appetizers include tacos, flautas (deep-fried tacos), chiles rellenos, enchiladas and tamales. Quesadillas feature flour tortillas rolled with a mild white cheese that you top with guacamole and refried beans. If you're stopping in for breakfast, don't expect to find Belgian waffles. Try the *huevos rancheros*! Taquerias' atmosphere is casual and friendly; English is spoken, but you might have to implement some gesturing to get your order across. Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner, 9 am-11 pm.

VERSAILLES
3555 SW 8th Street
☎ 305-444-0240
Inexpensive-Moderate

Versailles is the Cuban eatery where Miami's movers and shakers dine.

This legendary Little Havana restaurant is a must-stop for visitors. You won't know it, but you'll be rubbing elbows with Miami's cultural and political elite; everyone who's anyone eats at Versailles, though the local celebrities and cognoscenti usually dine late.

The menu is a veritable encyclopedia of Cuban cooking, from traditional *palomilla* steak – thin and juicy and smothered with onions – to *vaca frita*, the classic dish of shredded beef sautéed with onion. Pork is served roasted, cut into chunks and fried, grilled or barbecued. Chicken is roasted and fried or served boneless, grilled and seasoned. Seafood dishes include deep-fried whole red snapper, plus kingfish, dolphin, salmon, grouper and shrimp, prepared in a variety of ways, along with lobster creole and lightly breaded fish chunks.

Most entrées at Versailles are accompanied by black beans and rice and plantains in two variations – sweet and tender, or the thick, salted plantain chips called tostones. Versailles serves lunch and dinner,

but the menu doesn't really vary between the two. If you feel having a sandwich instead of an entrée, try the classic Cuban sandwich of ham, pork and cheese or the Elena Ruz, an unlikely but delicious combination of turkey, strawberry jam and cream cheese. The restaurant features a full bar of alcoholic accompaniments.

Breakfast at Versailles includes a variety of egg dishes, served with Cuban toast and *café con leche* – a strong, sweet mixture of espresso, sugar and hot milk – as well as a host of *pastelitos*, luscious Cuban pastries with fillings that include guava and cheese. Versailles' ambience is generally casual, but the aprés theater, club and concert crowds are frequently dressed to the nines. Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner, 8 am-2 am; extra-late on Fridays (3:30 am) and Saturdays (4:30 am).

Northeast Miami

Aventura

CHEF ALLEN'S
19088 NE 29th Avenue
☎ 305-935-2900
www.chefallen.com
Expensive-Very Expensive

Chef Allen Susser has written a number of cookbooks, and publishes a monthly newsletter. In the culinary world, he is a legend in his own time as the innovator who created New World Cuisine, a blend of regional influences and the flavors of the Caribbean, Latin America and Europe. The menu at Chef Allen's changes nightly, and there is a special Chef's Table dinner each Friday, during which he person-

You may purchase Chef Allen's sauces, spices, oils and vinegars at the restaurant or online.

ally explains the pairing of ingredients and wine matches.

On one particular night, the menu reflected the chef's eclectic expertise, with entrées that included passion fruit barbecued pompano with saffron-macadamia nut rice and peach salsa; fire-roasted rack of shrimp with black ink pasta, spicy yellow tomato and crispy calamari; Colorado lamb chops with Dijon mustard, roasted eggplant, goat cheese and chick pea pavé; and creamy polenta and oven-roasted tomato with portobello mushrooms and broccoli rabe. On the side were grilled asparagus with warm gorgonzola; Saratoga fries with mango ketchup; and rock shrimp and chive mashed potatoes.

Appetizers included venison carpaccio, chilled mango soup, lemon-poached hearts of palm and Bahamian lobster and crab cakes with tropical fruit chutney. Those who think they'll have room for dessert can pre-order the chocolate mango pecan souffle. Chef Allen's also has a full bar. Expect to dress up for dinner. Reservations are suggested and often required in season. Open nightly, 6-10:30 pm; Fridays and Saturdays until 11 pm.

FISH 54
18841 Biscayne Boulevard
Loehmann's Plaza
☎ 305-932-5022
Moderate-Expensive

Dance to jazz, international music and '70s disco after dining at Fish 54.

Prepare to tap your feet while dining, as Fish 54 serves equal parts great food and music in a happy atmosphere that, like a disco, attracts the casually dressed as well as the over-dressed. Italian flavors simmer through in dishes like thin-sliced filet mignon with arugula and chopped tomatoes; spaghetti Bolognese with red snapper and salmon; juicy veal

chops served with homemade mashed potatoes topped with parmesan; pan-seared Chilean sea bass served with a sauce of black olive paté, onion, peppers, Chardonnay and fresh tomato; and chicken in a red pepper and tomato sauce. Daily specials frequently include lobster fra diavolo, a Maine lobster tail served with mussels, clams and shrimp tossed in a piquant red sauce over pasta.

Appetizers include fish soup, pasta e fagioli, salads, and calamari with zucchini, while a dessert tray features an array of sweet treats, including creamy napoleons.

Afterward, work off your dinner on the dance floor. At press time, Wednesdays featured '70s music, Thursdays international music, Fridays Latin jazz, and "Saturday Night Fever" topped off the week. Open daily for lunch and dinner, 11:30 am-11:30 pm; Wednesdays-Saturdays until 12:30 am.

North Miami & Vicinity

THE ANTIQUE SHOPPE
AN ITALIAN EATERY
12885 Biscayne Boulevard
☎ 305-899-1870
Moderate

This friendly, family-style restaurant offers a full menu of Italian favorites, including linguine with clam sauce, ravioli stuffed with meat or cheese, chicken cacciatore, baked lasagna and a variety of pizzas. Seafood dishes include snapper Francese – fresh filets of fish lightly battered and sautéed in lemon butter. Entrées are served with a choice of soup or the house salad, a generous mix of lettuce, tomatoes, celery, carrot, chickpeas and bell peppers,

After dining at the Antique Shoppe, you can browse for antiques, curios and knickknacks in the restaurant's small shop.

drenched in a white wine vinaigrette dressing. Italian desserts include spumoni and cannoli. A children's menu is available. Open Tuesdays to Fridays, 11:30 am-10 pm; Saturdays 4-11 pm; Sundays noon-10 pm; closed Mondays.

LA PALOMA
10999 Biscayne Boulevard
☎ 305-891-0505
Expensive

Live music is featured at La Paloma Thursdays to Sundays.

Swiss Continental cuisine is served in an ornate, European setting of antiques at La Paloma. The menu is just as elegant and features an outstanding wiener schnitzel, breaded and sautéed in butter; steak au poivre Madagascar, a New York sirloin flambéed with brandy; and lamb chops dredged in a mix of bread crumbs, mustard, garlic and herbs. Specialties include shrimp over fettucine with saffron sauce, Mediterranean-style bouillabaisse, whole trout almondine, a whole duck a l'orange (for two), and chicken scallopini with morel sauce and homemade egg noodles.

Complementing your meal are a variety of hot and cold appetizers, including soups and salads, clams and oysters on the halfshell, coquilles St. Jacques, seafood crepes, and fettucine Alfredo. Save room for dessert – there's black forest cake, strawberries Romanoff, peach Melba, hot apple strudel, and sherbet Paloma with kiwi and vodka, among other tempting selections.

La Paloma also offers live entertainment; at press time, a piano bar was featured Mondays to Fridays, while entertainer Guillermo Zapata provided music for dancing Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings. Thursday was "All That Jazz" night, featuring local artists. Dinner reservations are suggested. Open

weekdays for lunch and dinner, 11:30-3 and 5 pm to midnight; weekends for dinner only, 4 pm to midnight.

THE GOURMET DINER
13951 Biscayne Boulevard
☎ 305-947-2255
Moderate

The name really says it all. While the restaurant looks like a diner, complete with counter, stainless steel walls, picture-window view and crowded seating, the menu is dazzlingly, deliciously French gourmet, and the variety almost overwhelming. Take your time while ordering, and definitely consult the daily menu board before making a decision. Daily specials might include steak tips in red wine sauce with onions, or a grilled tilapia filet in a subtle butter-caper sauce. In season, you might sample delectable soft-shell crabs or a hearty calamari steak in tomato sauce.

Originally a 41-seat diner located a few yards from the railroad tracks, the Gourmet Diner was moved across the street to its present location in 1994.

Calf's liver – seared and sautéed with minced garlic and fresh parsley – is a frequent special, along with veal chop, roast lamb and roast duck. Regular menu items include pastas, New York strip steak and roast chicken. Appetizers are something else you'll agonize over, and range from escargot and tuna or beef carpaccio to oysters Rockefeller and hearts of palm. For dessert, the fruit tart is a must, topped by strawberries, blueberries and kiwi with a creamy custard filling beneath. Open daily for lunch and dinner, 11 am-11 pm; noon-10:30 pm on Sundays.

IL TULIPANO
11052 Biscayne Boulevard
☎ 305-893-4811
Expensive-Very Expensive

Immediate, attentive services distinguishes this upscale Northern Italian restaurant, where plush surroundings and candelight serve to put the diner at ease, ready to sample outstanding pasta, beef and seafood dishes. Specialties include *ditali alla scogliera*, tube pasta in pomodoro sauce with fresh calamari, shrimp, scallops, clams and mussels; sea bass, served Mediterranean style with black and green olives, garlic and tomatoes; and filet of yellowtail coated with bread crumbs and broiled, served with fresh vegetables and potato pie. For landlubbers, the baby lamb chops, seared for a crisp exterior, are fragrant with rosemary, and served with roasted potatoes. Desserts include caramelized orange and grapefruit; strawberries and cream; and ricotta cheesecake. Open nightly except Mondays from 6-11 pm; closed Sundays and Mondays during the summer.

TANI GUCHI'S PLACE
2224 NE 123rd Street
☎ 305-892-6744
Moderate

Kosher sushi is served at Tani Guchi.

About two years ago, this sushi restaurant went glatt kosher and started closing during what some would consider peak restaurant hours – Friday night and all day Saturday. But with its location in a conservative Jewish neighborhood, as well as its popularity among Muslim and vegetarian diners, the locals have adapted to the schedule and Tani Guchi's continues to operate a brisk business. The vast dinner menu includes an extensive variety of sushi, sashimi, temaki (hand rolls) and other items (no shellfish), with American varieties such as bagel

rolls, California rolls and futo maki rolls also available. Hot selections include tempuras of vegetables, fish and chicken, along with chicken or fish katsu, omelettes of chicken or vegetables, duck, steak and tofu dishes, and their own version of pad thai.

Desserts are delectable and include a kind of tempura-fried banana split with banana-nut bread and vanilla Tofutti topped by hot chocolate sauce. Tani Guchi's is located in a small strip mall; look for it on the south side of the road. Open for lunch Mondays-Fridays, noon-2:30 pm; for dinner Mondays-Thursdays, 5:30-11 pm; and Sundays 5-10 pm. Closed Friday nights and Saturdays.

North Miami Beach

KEBAB
514 NE 167 Street
☎ 305-940-6309
Moderate

Sandwiched between shops and other restaurants in a tiny strip mall, Kebab isn't easy to find, but is well worth the search. Within the small dining room, a few tables and chairs are situated in the foreground while booths line the walls, each surprisingly private with high backs and gauzy white curtains that are tied back but may be drawn, if desired. Service is solicitous, but not intrusive, as you dine on delicious, traditional Indian fare. Entrées include a range of curries – chicken, lamb, seafood and vegetable – and tandoori dishes cooked on skewers in a charcoal clay oven. Accompany your meal with savory nan bread brushed with butter, or a hot appetizer like the Kebab special variety tray, offering a number of taste treats. Sweet lassi, a homemade yogurt drink, goes down well, especially if you like your curry hot. Open

daily for lunch and dinner, 11:30 am-10 pm; open at noon on Sundays.

LAURENZO'S CAFE
16385 W Dixie Highway
☎ 305-945-6381
Inexpensive

The gourmet food market at Laurenzo's Café features wines from all over the world.

It's not fine dining, but it's great dining. This self-service café surrounded by an old-fashioned food market offers scrumptious Italian favorites in hearty portions. Entrées include lasagna, eggplant, spaghetti and pizza, but specials also rotate daily. The Italian salad is drenched in a divine homemade dressing heavily flavored with parmesan. Before or after dining, browse the food market – which is more like a food museum – featuring gourmet items from around the world along with a deli, bakery and an astounding collection of wines. Open weekdays, 11 am-7 pm; Saturdays to 6:30 pm; Sundays to 4 pm.

MELTING POT
3143 NE 163 Street
☎ 305-947-2228
Moderate

Instead of digging into dinner, try dipping into it at the Melting Pot fondue restaurant. Cheese fondue entrées are served with French, rye and pumpernickel breads, apple wedges and fresh vegetables for dipping, with flavors including Swiss, cheddar and traditional Kirschwasser cheese, a blend of Swiss Gruyere and Emmenthaler cheeses in a white wine base with cherry brandy, lemon juice, garlic and spices. Filet mignon, chicken, shrimp, Teriyaki sirloin and fresh salmon are dipped either court bouillon style or in sesame seed and tempura batters. For

dessert, there are irresistible milk chocolate and white chocolate fondues, with strawberries, bananas, pineapple, cheesecake, marshmallows and pound cake for dipping. Open 5:30-11 pm, Fridays and Saturdays to midnight.

THAI HOUSE II
2250 NE 163 Street
☎ 305-940-6075
Moderate

If you know your Thai, you'll have no problem with this extensive menu. Otherwise, it may take a while to decide among the copious entrées, including curried lobster, scallops, duck, pork, chicken and beef. Specialties include a crispy half duck with sweet black sauce, deep-fried whole snapper, and volcano jumbo shrimp topped with chili sauce. A variety of special vegetable dishes includes mixed vegetable curry and tofu with mixed vegetables, while pad thai and egg noodles are among the noodle dishes. Desserts include pumpkin custard, imported lychee nuts, Thai sticks (fried dough, similar to traditional fried doughnuts), and, to satisfy the Western sweet tooth, Oreo cheesecake and peanut butter cream pie. Open for lunch and dinner, Mondays to Fridays, 11:30 am-10:30 pm and Saturdays noon-11 pm; for dinner only on Sundays, 5-10:30 pm.

North Bay Village

SHUCKER'S BAR & GRILL
1819 79th Street Causeway
☎ 305-866-1570
Inexpensive

This casual bayside eatery has outdoor tables set within spitting distance of the water, as well as cov-

ered table and bar seating. Outside is a sand volleyball court, and indoors are pool tables and a big-screen TV that broadcasts sporting events in season. Service isn't speedy, but you're relaxing and soaking in a spectacular view of the mainland and Miami Beach, so who cares? The menu features an array of nibbles, salads and burgers, as well as seafood and pasta platters. Open daily, 11 am-2 am.

SIAM BAYSHORE
1524 79th Street Causeway
☎ 305-864-7638
Moderate

Here's a Thai restaurant with a twist – a complete sushi bar offering nearly 120 items. You'll also wade through a vast menu of typical Thai dishes, including pork, chicken, shrimp and beef prepared in dozens of ways, along with duck and squid selections. Specialties priced slightly higher than the moderate range include frog's legs, lobster tail curry, and whole snapper, steamed or fried. Appetizers include rice noodle soup and typical *tom kar gai* soup flavored by chicken broth, coconut milk, lime, galanga root and hot chiles. Open weekdays for lunch, 11:30 am-3 pm; nightly for dinner, 4:30-11 pm.

Miami Beach

ASTOR PLACE
956 Washington Avenue (Astor Hotel)
South Beach
☎ 305-672-7217
Expensive

A "beautiful people" hangout, Astor Place has gone through some head chef changes, but at press time Johnny Vinczencz, renowned as an expert practitio-

ner of New Florida cuisine, was back. Blending pan-Asian, tropical and Mediterranean touches, the menu includes wasabi-seared tuna with rock shrimp and jasmine rice; Jamaican jerk veal tenderloin; lamb chops served with creamy mashed Yukon gold potatoes and baby vegetables; and seared, lemon-basil yellowtail snapper in a Chardonnay butter broth. Starters include a wild mushroom stack featuring grilled portobello layered between buttermilk pancakes; barbecue shrimp "martini," served in a martini glass with smoked shrimp-potato salad; and cornmeal-crusted duck cakes. An array of innovative salads and a tempting dessert tasting plate round out the menu.

Astor Place offers a Sunday jazz brunch with seatings at noon and 1:30 pm; reservations are required.

Astor Place is open nightly, 7-11 pm; until midnight on Fridays and Saturdays. Reservations are recommended, and are required Fridays and Saturdays.

BLUE DOOR
1685 Collins Avenue (Delano Hotel)
South Beach
☎ 305-674-6400
Expensive

Chic, nouvelle French cuisine with tropical, Asian, and Latin influences distinguishes the menu at this upscale eatery. Among the entrées are mahi-mahi filet with lime, fresh herbs and roasted hearts of palm; sea bass with shallots, ginger and white wine sauce; pan-seared giant shrimp with tempura leeks, served with sweet-and-sour pomegranate sauce; and roasted lobster in soy, lime and butter sauce. For landlubbers, the menu includes stuffed quail with mango chutney, marinated rack of venison, rack of lamb and a chicken breast roll in coconut milk, lemongrass and lime juice. Superb desserts echo the

Candlelight and floor-to-ceiling curtains give Blue Door a romantic ambience.

tropics and include passion fruit crêpe soufflé, mango mousse and guava cheesecake.

Blue Door's menu changes about three times a year, so new and different items may be featured when you visit. Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner, 7 am-11:30 pm. Dinner reservations are recommended.

CHINA GRILL
404 Washington Avenue
South Beach
☎ 305-534-2211
Expensive-Very Expensive

China Grill can be a mob scene on weekends, but the frenetic atmosphere doesn't detract from a superb dining experience. An Asian-influenced menu includes pan-seared tuna spiced with pepper and cumin, sizzling whole snapper, and seared mahi-mahi in a light sweet-and-sour sauce. Meat lovers will appreciate a 38-oz. porterhouse steak served with pickled cabbage, and a grilled, tamarind-glazed pork chop. Other choices include mushroom risotto with roasted squab, Japanese panko-crusted veal, and crispy duck. Portions are huge, and side dishes à la carte, so you may want to consider sharing an entrée.

A vast appetizer menu ranges from dumplings made of lamb, broccoli rabe or shrimp and sweet potato, to calamari salad with lime and miso, and duck pancakes with shiitake sauce. Desserts are served in enormous portions, and include strawberry tiramisu made with chocolate chip sponge cake and layered with espresso-flavored mascarpone cheese and pureed strawberries. Open weekdays for lunch, 11:45 am-5 pm; dinner is served nightly from 6 pm-mid-

night, and until 1 am Fridays and Saturdays. Reservations are suggested; valet parking is available.

CHRISTINE LEE'S
17082 Collins Avenue
Miami Beach
☎ 305-947-1717
Moderate-Expensive

A South Florida mainstay for more than 30 years, this Oriental-Continental restaurant is located on the north end of the beach in Sunny Isles, and continues to please old fans and win new ones with entrées like 12-ounce sirloin steaks, broiled filet mignon, basil-wrapped lamb chops and veal Française. Entrées include lobster Cantonese, Chinese steak, crispy shrimp, steamed filet of red snapper and Christine's Special – a blend of boneless chicken and lobster with shrimp, scallops, barbecued pork, duck and choice mixed Chinese vegetables. An array of Szechuan and Mandarin specialties includes jumbo shrimp, sliced beef Hunan style and moo shoo pork, while classic favorites include lo mein and chow mein dishes. Open nightly, 4-11 pm. Early bird dinners served 4-6 pm. Reservations are suggested for parties of four or more.

ESCOPAZZO
1311 Washington Avenue
South Beach
☎ 305-674-9450
Expensive

Escopazzo hosts monthly winemaker dinners.

Owner Giuseppe "Pino" Bodoni greets visitors to this charming, cozy Italian restaurant that is a standout in Miami for its superb hand-rolled pastas, authentic risottos and fresh seafood. A standout of the restaurant's decor is a walk-in wine vault housing about 1,000 bottles in temperature-controlled perfection.

The menu features such specialties as pappardelle with a ragu of buffalo meat; risotto with arugula and sun-dried tomatoes; tagliolini with Costa Rican white shrimp and red grapes; pumpkin ravioli with amaretto; braised leg of Colorado lamb; and sea bass coated with "scales" of thin potato crust. Specials might include venison or gnocchi with seafood. Appetizers include swordfish carpaccio, sautéed eggplant in tomato sauce, and salads featuring Dungeness crabmeat and marinated octopus.

For dessert, there is traditional tiramisu and not-so-traditional citrus aspic. Escopazzo is open nightly, 6 pm-midnight, and Fridays and Saturdays until 1 am. Reservations are recommended.

THE FORGE
432 41st Street
Miami Beach
☎ 305-538-8533
Moderate-Expensive

A wine connoisseur's nirvana, the Forge's cavernous wine cellar is home to about 300,000 labels, and you'll want to choose a vintage for your continental repast. The restaurant's menu is heavy on steaks, but there are spa alternatives for the calorie-conscious, though you shouldn't pass up the chocolate soufflé for dessert (order early; it takes 45 minutes to prepare).

Many locals visit the Forge for the atmosphere alone. Themed rooms include the Library – offering a comfortable, romantic ambience – and striking art decorates the entire restaurant. Open nightly for dinner from 6 pm-midnight, and till 1 am Friday and Saturday. Reservations are required.

JOE'S STONE CRAB
11 Washington Avenue
South Beach
☎ 305-673-0365
www.joesstonecrab.com
Expensive-Very Expensive

This legendary eatery on Miami Beach, open since 1913, serves up those delectable claws along with a host of familiar favorites, including their signature mustard sauce, must-have cole slaw, hash browns and creamed garlic spinach. The menu also includes Alaskan king crab, steaks, chicken, and homemade Key lime pie.

Joe's deliciousness is no secret. On weekends, the line snakes out the door, and the bar is packed with people waiting for tables. To avoid the line, try lunch at Joe's or order take-out from the adjacent Joe's Take-Away, open 11:30 am-9 pm, Sundays-Thursdays; until 10 pm, Fridays and Saturdays. The restaurant is open Tuesdays-Sundays for lunch, 11:30-2:30; hours for dinner are Sundays-Thursdays, 5-10 pm, and Fridays and Saturdays to 11 pm. Please note that the restaurant is open only from October 15th to May 15th.

Stone crabs are available only during their season, which is mid-October to mid-May.

LARIOS ON THE BEACH
820 Ocean Drive
South Beach
☎ 305-532-9577
Moderate

Miami's Gloria Estefan co-owns this sidewalk café, which serves satisfying portions of Cuban staples like *churrasco* steak, *vaca frita*, *arroz con pollo*, *paella*, *zarzuela de mariscos* and a host of Cuban sandwiches. Accompanying most meals are sensational black beans. "Salsa" off the calories after din-

ner. Open for lunch and dinner Sundays-Thursdays, 11:30 am-midnight; until 2 am Fridays and Saturdays.

1220 at THE TIDES
1220 Ocean Drive, in the Tides Hotel
☎ 305-604-5000
Very Expensive

An elegant menu and dramatic surroundings make dining at 1220 nothing short of sublime. Overlooking the beach and ocean, with the exquisite decor of the Tides Hotel as a backdrop, diners will delight in such entrees as steamed filet of sea bass in curry coconut broth with baby shiitake mushrooms; roasted lamb chop atop flageolets (tiny French kidney beans); roasted Muscovy duck breast served with baked apple; and roasted chicken breast with leeks and black truffles.

Appetizers include pineapple-marinated tuna tartare with tiny peanuts, lobster gazpacho, and pan-seared pâté de foie gras, while the dessert menu features coconut mascarpone cheesecake, homemade ice creams and Key lime cannoli. Open nightly for dinner, 6-11 pm. Reservations are required.

MARK'S SOUTH BEACH
1120 Collins Avenue, in the Nash Hotel
☎ 305-604-9050
Expensive-Very Expensive

Chef Mark Militello also has restaurants in Fort Lauderdale and Boca Raton.

Third and most Mediterranean of the South Florida restaurants created by chef Mark Militello – one of the celebrated "Mango Gang" of chefs famed for innovative cuisine using fresh, local ingredients – Mark's South Beach presents culinary masterpieces in a sleek dining room with soft cove lighting and French doors leading to the Nash's three swimming

pools. An extensive menu includes tenderloin of beef stuffed with roasted garlic purée on a polenta crouton; Scottish salmon with truffled sweet pea coulis and leeks braised with tomatoes and mascarpone; pan-seared black grouper with poached potatoes and spinach; and sliced moullard duck breast over red colusari rice (a blended rice from the Middle East).

Accompanying the meal are a range of inventive appetizers, including blue spot prawns, sweetbreads, pan-roasted loin of rabbit, and a consommé of poached Maine lobster with white beans, pumpkin and pasta. Desserts are equally creative and change nightly; selections may include a banana split, sorbet or upside-down apple carrot cake. Savor them with one of eight dessert wines or ports.

Mark's also offers two six-course tasting menus if you can't decide what you want from the regular menu. Reservations are recommended; valet parking is provided. Open nightly for dinner, 7-11 pm; Fridays and Saturdays to midnight.

MOROCCAN NIGHTS
9551 Harding Avenue
Miami Beach
☎ 305-865-5333
Moderate

Moroccan Nights features belly dancing shows nightly at 9 pm.

Located on the northern side of Miami Beach in Surfside, Moroccan Nights re-creates the mysterious charms of Northern Africa, with carpets handmade in Rabat (Morocco's capital), walls covered in rich fabric, and exotic knickknacks. The menu, too, transports the diner to Casablanca with a range of couscous dishes featuring chicken, beef, vegetables and lamb, as well as brochettes of chicken, fish, lamb and spiced beef. Appetizers include the Moroc-

can Nights salad, which changes daily, and *bastilla* pies of phyllo dough filled with chicken, seafood or vegetables. Desserts include sweet Moroccan pastries, or you may opt for a plate of fresh oranges with cinnamon and sugar. Open nightly, 5 pm-midnight; closed Mondays.

NEWS CAFE
800 Ocean Drive
South Beach
☎ 305-538-6397
Inexpensive-Moderate

News Café is a sidewalk café, newsstand, and bookstore.

Grab a magazine from the adjoining newsstand and park yourself to people watch, sip coffee or wine, and enjoy a variety of dishes, from complete seafood, beef and chicken entrées to burgers and Middle Eastern specialties. A variety of pastas, pizzas and sandwiches are also served, along with terrific salads and fruit and cheese plates. Watch the sun rise during a breakfast that includes eggs, omelettes, cereals, bagels and muffins. Open 24 hours.

THE ORIGINAL PITA HUT
534 41st Street
Miami Beach
☎ 305-531-6090
Inexpensive

41st Street is also known as Arthur Godfrey Road.

Nothing fancy, but good, fresh Middle Eastern and Israeli specialties including pitas stuffed with seasoned falafel and shwarma, and luscious salads and spreads like baba ghannouj (eggplant dip) and hummus (ground chick peas). For a sample of several tastes, try the Middle East combo with tabbouleh (bulgar wheat salad), tahini (ground sesame), spicy Turkish salad, and hummus/baba ghannouj. Other specialties include the Lebanese ful medames, a mix of warm fava beans, tahini and chopped hard-boiled

egg served over hummus. For dessert, only baklava will do. Open Sundays to Thursdays, 11:30 am-11 pm, and Fridays 11 am-5 pm. Closed Saturdays.

THAI TONI
890 Washington Avenue
South Beach
☎ 305-538-8424
Moderate-Expensive

A tad trendy and a tourist hangout, Thai Toni doesn't try to fool the locals with pretentious fare; in fact, it's a locals' favorite, too. Here you'll find reliably tasty red, green and massaman curry dishes, pad thai rice noodles in peanut sauce, coconut-marinated grilled beef satay and ginger-crusted whole red snapper. Not for the faint of heart – or tongue – is spicy green papaya salad, doused with lime juice and Thai chilis and tossed with poached shrimp and peanuts. Open nightly for dinner, 6:30-11:30 pm; Fridays and Saturdays until 12:30 am.

PUERTO SAGUA
700 Collins Avenue
South Beach
☎ 305-673-1115
Inexpensive-Moderate

This casual, no-frills Cuban eatery serves up a complete menu of local favorites, including *ropa vieja* (strips of beef in a tomato-base sauce), *picadillo* (marinated ground beef with green olives), *arroz con pollo* (chicken and yellow rice), Cuban-style steak, pork, and a huge variety of sandwiches. Whether you're stopping by for a breakfast of eggs, Cuban toast and *café con leche* or a late-night snack, the service is friendly and fast. Open daily, 7:30 am-2 am.

An enormous mural of Havana, created by local artists the Scull sisters, graces one wall at Puerto Sagua.

WOLFIE'S
2038 Collins Avenue
South Beach
☎ 305-538-6626
Inexpensive-Moderate

The original Wolfie's opened in 1947.

In its heyday, Wolfie's was *the* place to land after theater or nightlife on Miami Beach. It's lost some of its luster, but still offers an enormous menu of deli specialties, including overstuffed sandwiches of corned beef, pastrami, brisket, turkey and liverwurst, cold deli platters and a host of bagel combinations. Entrées include old-fashioned beef stew, broiled strip steak, baked meat loaf, chicken in a pot, broiled filets of sole and flounder, and hot open-face sandwiches. Desserts are generous and almost entrées in themselves, with cheescake, black forest cake, chocolate sundae and Russian bobka among the choices. Take-out party platters and bakery items are also available. Open 24 hours.

A smaller version of the original Wolfie's recently opened in Aventura Mall and is open from 10:30 am to 10 pm, ☎ 305-682-9653.

YUCA
501 Lincoln Road
South Beach
☎ 305-532-9822
Expensive

You've heard of New World cuisine. Well, this is *Nuevo Latino* cuisine, and it's phenomenal. Among the one-of-a-kind creations are plantain-coated dolphin with tamarind tartar sauce, pan-seared grouper dusted with crushed cumin and pumpkin seeds, and pork tenderloin with green apple and mango *chimichurri* and a stack of yuca shoestring fries. A Latin version of surf-and-turf pairs a tender *chur-*

rasco – boneless skirt steak that's made its way from Argentina and Nicaragua to restaurant tables in Miami – with lobster tail, drizzled with butter and Key lime juice. Vegetarians can try the grilled portobello mushroom filled with vegetable paella. Side dishes include rosemary-garlic mashed potatoes and red beans and rice, also known as *congri* or *moros y cristianos* in some Cuban restaurants.

Make sure an inventive appetizer or two are part of your meal; choices include Gulf shrimp sautéed with olive oil and coconut milk, a corn tamale mixed with smoked turkey and olives, and Yuca's signature black bean soup with rice cakes, sour cream and green onions. And you've never seen desserts like these: chocolate *tres leches* (literally, "three milks"), chocolate cake layered with Kahlua mousse, covered with chocolate meringue and served with chocolate sherbet; Key lime napoleon – tart, light and garnished with tropical fruit; and *tres cocos muy locos*, a coconut half filled with crème brûlée and flecked with fresh shaved coconut.

On Saturday nights, there's live entertainment at the upstairs club, which swings until 2 am. Dinner reservations are required. Open daily for lunch, noon to 3 pm, and dinner 6-11 pm; Fridays and Saturdays to midnight.

Coconut Grove

BALEEN
4 Grove Isle (in the Grove Isle Club and Resort)
☎ 305-857-5007
Expensive-Very Expensive

The meal begins with oysters shucked tableside, and from there, things only get better at Baleen. The lob-

Baleen serves a Sunday buffet brunch from 11 am to 3 pm. Reservations are recommended.

ster bisque is probably the best in town, rich yet light, while a warm salad of roasted mushrooms and asparagus is heavenly. Other starters include crab cakes with avocado salad, grilled calamari, fresh conch salad and lobster martini. Entrées range from surf to turf and include wood-roasted sea bass; veal T-bone marinated in olive oil, rosemary and roasted garlic; and Asian bouillabaisse, a generous mix of shellfish in a flavorful broth of coconut milk, lime, ginger and curry. Desserts are extraordinary as well, from warm chocolate fondue served with strawberries and cake to fresh-churned banana, chocolate, cinnamon and ginger caramel ice cream.

Diners can choose the elegant main dining room or sit outdoors overlooking the ocean. Open daily from 7 am to 10 pm, Baleen doesn't insist on jacket-and-tie formality, but you'll want to dress up a bit. Dinner reservations are required.

BICE
2669 South Bayshore Drive, in the Wyndham Grand Bay Hotel
☎ 305-860-0960
Expensive

Continuing an Italian tradition that began in Milan in 1926, Miami's Bice is one of nearly 20 Bice restaurants around the world, serving classic Italian cuisine and homemade pastas. The Miami establishment also features a piano bar and an outdoor terrace for al fresco dining during cooler months. Open nightly, 6-10:30 pm and till 11:30 pm Friday and Saturday. Reservations are recommended.

CHART HOUSE
51 Chart House Drive (South Bayshore Drive)
☎ 305-856-9741
Moderate-Expensive

A daily selection of fresh fish might include baked scallops, mahi-mahi, coconut crunch shrimp, Hawaiian ahi, Maryland crab cakes, Norwegian salmon or grilled swordfish at this waterfront eatery in the Grove. The surf-and-turf menu also includes glazed rack of lamb with coconut-ginger rice; teriyaki beef medallions with mango relish and Kona fried onions; prime rib and filet mignon; fresh New England lobster; and chicken breast served grilled or teriyaki style. Dinners include a spectacular salad bar – discontinued for a while, but back again. For dessert, try the chocolate lava cake, Key lime pie or macadamia nut sundae. Open weekdays 5-11 pm, Fridays and Saturdays until midnight, and until 10 pm on Sundays.

Chart House features an unlimited salad bar.

THE CHEESECAKE FACTORY
3015 Grand Avenue (in CocoWalk)
☎ 305-447-9898
www.thecheesecakefactory.com
Inexpensive-Moderate

Bring a doggie bag. The portions at The Cheesecake Factory are enormous! And the menu is so extensive, there is something to suit every taste. Items include individual pizzas, a variety of burgers, seafood, steaks and 13 different pasta dishes, including Thai chicken pasta and fettucine with chicken and sun-dried tomatoes. Specialty dishes include shepherd's pie, meatloaf, chicken and biscuits, spicy cashew chicken and a number of Mexican dishes. Salads are more than a meal in themselves and range from Chinese chicken salad and Santa Fe salad to cobb salad, Mediterranean chopped salad and Greek salad. But

Thirty varieties of cheesecake are made at The Cheesecake Factory.

wait, there's more – a host of sandwiches, including the humble grilled cheese and the exotic Navajo, a creation of warm fry bread stuffed with grilled marinated chicken and avocado.

So where does the cheesecake come in? At the end, and we wish you luck in choosing from among 30 different kinds, including Southern pecan, Key lime, lemon mousse, and Craig's crazy carrot cake. Of course, there are other dessert choices, ranging from fresh apple dumpling to strawberry shortcake.

Located in Coconut Grove's CocoWalk, the restaurant is open daily for lunch and dinner, 11:30 am-midnight. There are two other Miami area locations, at Aventura Mall, 19501 Biscayne Boulevard, ☎ 305-792-9696; and at Dadeland Mall, 7535 N. Kendall Drive, ☎ 305-665-5400.

FRANZ & JOSEPH'S
3145 Commodore Plaza
☎ 305-448-2282
Moderate

The neighborhood ambience at this Grove restaurant is genuine, as you'll discover when greeted by Franz (Joseph oversees the kitchen). The menu is Continental with Caribbean and Asian touches, and features specialties like sesame-crusted tuna steak with wasabi and pickled ginger; snapper with banana and mango chutney; fettucine with shrimp and white wine; cheese tortellini with marinara sauce; and chicken ballotine, stuffed with spinach and sun-dried tomato. Entrées are served with a nice house salad featuring mesclun, carrot, radish and plum tomato. Innovative starters include avocado with marinated scallops, mussels and shrimp; Florida seafood cakes served with tomato coulis; and fried calamari. Homemade desserts arrive on a tray and

include chocolate brownie cake with chocolate mousse. Open nightly from 5:30-11 pm. Reservations are preferred.

LA GLORIA TAQUERIA MEXICANA
2957 Florida Avenue
☎ 305-448-9505
Inexpensive-Moderate

This homestyle Mexican taqueria represents the best in Mexican cooking, with a variety of tasty dishes ranging from saucy to saucier. Entrées include grilled chicken breast marinated in cilantro, beef tenderloin served with tortilla strips mixed with chiles and refried beans, and a mélange of *cazuelas* and *guisos caseros* – homemade stews and sauced meats served over tortillas or in small pots. There is also a seafood bar offering a range of ceviches, served in a glass or over toasted tortillas. Speaking of tortillas, you won't find any better in the city. Imported from Mexico, they are mixed, rolled, cut and cooked by a special machine to emerge thin and light and fragrant with corn.

Enhancing the meal are *antojitos* – the Mexican take on tapas – as well as other starters, including small chicken tacos with guacamole, sour cream and cheese; cheese quesadillas; and classic tortilla soup. Desserts change almost daily, but may include coconut flan and tropical fruit mousses. A children's menu includes nonalcoholic strawberry margaritas. Open daily for lunch and dinner, noon-11 pm, and until 1 am Fridays and Saturdays. Happy Hour nightly from 7-9 pm featuring half-price margaritas.

GREENSTREET CAFE
3110 Commodore Plaza
☎ 305-444-0244
Inexpensive-Moderate

Breakfast is served daily until 3 pm at the Greenstreet Café.

This sidewalk café in the Grove is a great place to relax and people-watch while enjoying an array of soups, sandwiches, salads and burgers, along with entrées that include jerk chicken, pasta dishes, fresh seafood, steak and pizza. For your al fresco breakfast, enjoy eggs and omelettes, pancakes, waffles and French toast. Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner from 7:30 am-11:30 pm; Fridays and Saturdays until midnight.

MONTY'S STONE CRAB
2550 South Bayshore Drive
☎ 305-858-1431
Moderate-Expensive

Monty's features live calypso and reggae music from 5 pm weekdays, and from 12:30 pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

You can go fancy or casual at Monty's, which features a more formal restaurant as well as an outdoor restaurant/raw bar that overlooks the bay. Besides their famous stone crabs, a range of seafood specialties includes sautéed Key lime garlic shrimp, Florida lobster tail and whole Maine lobster. Fresh fish ranges from dolphin and grouper to red snapper, salmon and swordfish, prepared in a variety of ways. There are pastas, beef and poultry dishes, along with such appetizers as crab cakes, steamed garlic clams and conch fritters. On the side, try Monty's hashed browns, creamed garlic spinach or steamed asparagus with hollandaise sauce. Desserts, made fresh daily, include Key lime pie and cappuccino flan with chocolate wafers and Godiva chocolate sauce. A children's menu is also available.

The indoor restaurant is open weekdays for lunch, 11:30 am-3:30 pm, and dinner, 5 pm-11 pm; until

midnight Fridays and Saturdays. Hours for the outdoor restaurant are 11:30 am-1 am daily. Another Monty's is in South Beach at 300 Alton Road, ☎ 305-673-3444.

SEÑOR FROG'S
3008 Grand Avenue
☎ 305-448-0999
Moderate

A party atmosphere prevails at this casual Coconut Grove eatery, where Mexican specialties include ceviche shrimp, chili con queso, chimichangas, skirt steak, and the staple dishes – tostadas, burritos and enchiladas. A scrumptious *natilla* (custard) pudding ends the meal while margaritas keep things lively. Open Sundays-Wednesdays, 11:30 am-1 am; Thursdays until 3 am with salsa music and dancing; and Fridays and Saturdays until 2 am.

Every Thursday is Salsa Night until 3 am at Señor Frog's.

Key Biscayne

THE PURPLE DOLPHIN
350 Ocean Drive (Sonesta Beach Resort)
☎ 305-361-2021
Moderate

A beach and ocean view accompany the dining at the Purple Dolphin, where entrées include Key West yellowtail snapper with lobster, artichoke and basil risotto, and grilled marinated skirt steak with roasted sweet potatoes. Diners may choose the outside terrace or sit indoors. The Purple Dolphin is open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner from 7 am-11 am, noon to 3 pm, and 6-10:30 pm.

THE RUSTY PELICAN
3201 Rickenbacker Causeway
☎ 305-361-3818
Expensive

Rusty Pelican serves a sumptuous Sunday brunch from 10:30 am to 3 pm.

If you're lucky enough to get a window table, you'll enjoy sweeping views of the downtown Miami skyline and Biscayne Bay while dining at this Greater Miami seafood institution. Among the fresh fish entrées are snapper, swordfish, dolphin, Maine lobster and stone crab claws. Feeling adventurous? Try the Chinese spiced grouper – a fresh local filet rubbed with Chinese chili paste, then seared.

House specialties include spicy lobster and crab pasta, steak and lobster, sautéed veal with sun-dried tomatoes and pistachio nuts, and Rusty Pelican's own curry with shrimp or chicken. Meat lovers can choose the prime rib of beef, gorgonzola crusted New York steak, filet mignon or roast rack of lamb. The Rusty Pelican is open daily for lunch and dinner, 11 am-4 pm and 5-11 pm; till midnight Friday and Saturday.

SUNDAYS ON THE BAY
5420 Crandon Boulevard
☎ 305-361-6777
Moderate

Relax and enjoy a gorgeous bay view overlooking the Crandon Park Marina, tropical drink in hand and great seafood on the way. That's the dining experience at Sundays – an apt name for a restaurant where the ambience and the attitude are casual and relaxing. The Key Biscayne restaurant also has its own dock so patrons can sail in and eat either on the breezy outdoor deck or in the air-conditioned dining room. The international seafood menu includes fresh fish, Maine lobster, pasta specialties and a vast ar-

ray of appetizers. A full bar serves up standard cocktails and exotic frozen drinks. Open Mondays-Thursdays, 11:30 am-11:30 pm; Fridays and Saturdays until 12:30 am; and Sundays until 10:30 pm. Sunday brunch starts at 10:30 am. An adjacent nightclub, also called Sundays, opens at 10 pm and swings until 3 am.

STEFANO'S
24 Crandon Boulevard
☎ 305-361-7007
Expensive

Like a plot straight out of *Miami Vice*, the owner and namesake of Stefano's was busted in 1996 on money-laundering charges. However, even with a new owner in place, the name stayed and Stefano's remains a popular hangout for locals, especially on Fridays and Saturdays when the restaurant turns into a disco and sizzles until 5 am.

If you've come to dine, an Italian/Latin menu features homemade tortelloni, snapper and shrimp in a white wine and lemon butter sauce, salmon di Monaco in balsamic vinegar sauce, lobster in season, rack of lamb, filet mignon, paillard of veal, and veal scaloppine in butter and lime juice. Appetizers include calamari fritti, grilled portobello mushrooms, and antipasto. Open Sundays to Thursdays, 5-11 pm; dinner is served until 3 am Fridays and Saturdays.

Coral Gables

AMALFI
1930 Ponce de Leon Boulevard
☎ 305-444-3083
Moderate-Expensive

Amalfi's wood-burning oven cooks seafood and meats to perfection.

Amalfi's Nicaraguan chef adds some bold strokes to classic Italian cooking, making this striking restaurant one of the area's most popular. In addition to homemade pasta dishes like spinach fettucine with scallops and zucchini, and black ravioli stuffed with lobster meat, the restaurant excels at entrées cooked in their wood-burning oven. Among these are rack of lamb with rosemary sauce, duck breast in apricot sauce, and a loin chop marinated in olive oil, garlic, sage, rosemary and other seasonings. Seafood offerings include fish and shellfish baked in parchment, salmon with balsamic vinegar and strawberries, shrimp baked with achiote sauce in plantain leaves, and the catch of the day.

Appetizers include a Caprese salad of tomato, mozzarella and basil; prosciutto with melon; mixed grilled vegetables; and steamed mussels and shrimp with Tuscan beans. Classic Italian desserts include tiramisu, creamy panna cotta, and zabaglione, a kind of Italian custard. Open weekdays, noon-3 pm and nightly from 6-10 pm.

BANGKOK BANGKOK
157 Giralda Avenue
☎ 305-444-2397
Moderate

Bangkok Bangkok is on Giralda Avenue, known as Coral Gables' "Restaurant Row."

Sit in a chair or on the floor, Thai-style, while dining on delicious specialties such as Earth, Wind and Fire, a blend of chicken breast and cashew nuts with

mixed vegetables in a spicy Thai sauce; or Little Big Man, steamed fresh fish that's fried until crispy and doused in hot chili sauce. Open daily for lunch and dinner, 11:30 am-10:30 pm weekdays, till 11 pm Friday and Saturday, and till 10 pm Sunday.

BISCAYNE CAFETERIA
147 Miracle Mile
☎ 305-444-9005
Inexpensive

You'll find comfort food and budget prices at this old-fashioned cafeteria, where daily entrées include roast turkey, brisket of beef, roast beef, lamb shank, poached salmon and fried or baked chicken. There are also daily specials, including corned beef and cabbage on Mondays. Fresh salads run the gamut from chicken, potato and Waldorf to carrot, fresh beet and cucumber, while side dishes are straight out of grandma's kitchen – mashed potatoes, creamed spinach, corn, macaroni and cheese, eggplant and baked potato. An array of sandwiches and oversized desserts completes the homestyle menu. Open daily, 11 am-8:30 pm.

Biscayne Cafeteria has been open for nearly 50 years.

CAFFE ABBRACCI
318 Aragon Avenue
☎ 305-441-0700
Expensive

This elegant Italian *ristorante* is popular for power lunching and celebrity-spotting, but it's the wonderful food and attentive service that keeps people coming back for more. Entrées include such seafood items as tuna, swordfish, salmon and shrimp, each prepared with a complementary herb, as well as grilled dishes like sirloin steak and mushrooms, lamb chops in a mustard-wine sauce, chicken with

spinach, and a variety of veal dishes. An array of pasta specialties includes cannelloni stuffed with roasted veal and vegetables in a light tomato sauce; linguine in tomato sauce with fish and seafood; and spaghetti with grilled vegetables. The meal is framed by appetizers like carpaccio, fresh goose liver, and mussels in white wine sauce, and desserts that include tiramisu, chocolate mousse cake and berries with zabaglione. Open daily for lunch and dinner, 11:30 am-3:30 pm and 6-11:30 pm; Fridays and Saturdays until 12:30 am. Dinner reservations are required.

CANTON CHINESE RESTAURANT
2614 Ponce de Leon Boulevard
☎ 305-448-3736
Inexpensive-Moderate

Enjoy good Chinese food at a good value in a friendly, informal setting. Specialties include Cantonese steak and honey-garlic chicken, with dim sum served at lunchtime. In addition to Cantonese, Szechuan and Mandarin cuisine are also served, along with selections from the sushi bar. Open daily, 11 am-midnight. Another Canton is in north Kendall at 6661 South Dixie Highway, ☎ 305-666-5511.

CHRISTY'S
3101 Ponce de Leon Boulevard
☎ 305-446-1400
Expensive

Living up to its reputation as one of the area's premier steakhouses, Christy's serves only the finest corn-fed Midwestern beef, aged several weeks, for its impressive entrées of New York strip steak, filet mignon, porterhouse, and prime rib (available in standard and extra large cuts). Plenty of non-beef

selections are available as well, including roast duck, sautéed grouper, salmon, chicken breast, veal porcini, fried shrimp, lamb chops and a one-pound lobster tail. Entrées are accompanied by Christy's famous Caesar salad, served with or without anchovies. Appetizers range from potato skins and black bean soup to oysters Rockefeller and shrimp cocktail. The meal ends with fabulous desserts, including blackout cake, apple crumble and a baked Alaska that is worth the trip alone.

Christy's three dining rooms are richly decorated and boast big, comfortable chairs. Dress is casual, though you may want to take it up a notch for dinner. Open weekdays, 11:30 am-10 pm, and Saturdays and Sundays, 5-11 pm. Reservations are required for both lunch and dinner.

HOUSE OF INDIA
22 Merrick Way (Douglas Road)
☎ 305-444-2348
Moderate

House of India has a great lunch buffet.

Going strong since 1975, House of India serves classic Indian food at a good value. Entrées run the gamut from tandoori and curry dishes served with mixed white and basmati rice to complete seafood meals including soup and appetizers, and vegetarian specialties like vegetable biryani, a blend of nine vegetables with nuts and rice in korma sauce. Meals are enhanced by a variety of breads, including deep-fried puri and nan , dipped in tasty chutney sauces, along with appetizers ranging from vegetable and cheese pakoras to classic Mulligatawny soup. Open weekdays for lunch, 11:30 am-3 pm, and nightly for dinner, 5-10:45 pm.

LA PALME D'OR
1200 Anastasia Avenue, in the Biltmore Hotel
☎ 305-445-1926
Very Expensive

Entering the historic Biltmore Hotel is like stepping back in time to a gilded age of elegance, with its soaring painted ceilings, ornate furnishings, interior patios and trickling fountains. La Palme d'Or fits right into this portrait of Gatsby-era refinement with its tasteful decor, sparkling crystal chandeliers, impeccable service and superb nouvelle French cuisine. Dominated by seafood, the menu includes filet of John Dory sautéed in butter; pine nut-crusted codfish steak; brochette of scallops; fricassee of Maine lobster served with summer vegetables; and baked sea bream spread with a mixture of sun-dried tomatoes, olive oil, garlic and herbs.

Other entrées include chicken breast stuffed with eggplant caviar, filets of roasted duck, beef tenderloin, roasted veal chop and herb-crusted rack of lamb. Creative appetizers range from foie gras with truffles and roasted langoustine in court bouillon to chilled tomato soup with goat cheese mousse, and lobster bisque. As you might expect, desserts are divine, and include Key lime-rosemary ice cream and a crème brûlée napoleon. Dress the part! Open Mondays-Thursdays, 6-10 pm, and Fridays and Saturdays until 11 pm. Closed Sundays. Reservations are required.

NORMAN'S
21 Almeria Avenue
☎ 305-446-6767
Very Expensive

Culinary extravagance awaits at Norman's, where the menu reflects a mix of Latin American, Carib-

bean and Asian influences in vibrant dishes created from local produce, seafood and meat. Seafood specialties include pan-cooked filet of Key West Yellowtail snapper with mashed potatoes and grilled asparagus spears; rum-and-pepper-painted grouper with boniato (a root vegetable similar to sweet potato) mash and caramelized plantain; and hibachi tuna with Asian jus and Oriental mushroom sauce. Other signature main courses include pork tenderloin with golden Haitian grits and Rioja-braised lamb shanks with South American fries and caramelized vegetables.

Award-winning chef Norman Van Aken is nationally recognized as a pioneer of New World Cuisine.

For starters, try the creamy conch chowder with saffron and coconut milk or yuca-stuffed crispy shrimp. If you visit mid-week you might want to try the degustation (sampling) menu, and if you choose the accompanying flight of wines, the sommelier will describe each selection and explain its pairing with the food. Norman's wine list features more than 325 selections from all over the world. Open Mondays-Thursdays, 6-10:30 pm; Fridays and Saturdays until 11 pm. Reservations are requested.

RED FISH GRILL
9610 Old Cutler Road
☎ 305-668-8788
Moderate-Expensive

Dine on the beachside patio or inside the coral-and-wood main dining room at this beautiful, bayside seafood hideaway in south Coral Gables. Entrées include grilled or sautéed snapper, grouper, tuna or salmon, along with grilled chicken breast, churrasco steak and tenderloin of beef. Appetizers range from fried shrimp, conch fritters and pan-fried crabs to tomato-and-mozzarella salad. Open Tuesdays-Fridays, 6-10 pm; from 5 pm on weekends.

Red Fish Grill is in Coral Gables' Matheson Hammock Park.

RESTAURANT PLACE ST. MICHEL
162 Alcazar Avenue
☎ 305-446-6572
Expensive-Very Expensive

Restaurant Place St. Michel is in the beautifully restored Hotel Place St. Michel, built in 1926.

The look is lushly romantic at Restaurant Place St. Michel, with gleaming wood floors, vintage furniture and accents, and soft lighting complementing an eclectic mix of international cuisines. The menu features fresh local fish, prime aged meats, wild game, innovative pasta dishes and tempting homemade desserts. Menu highlights include grilled Norwegian salmon with a roasted corn-and-lobster risotto in lemongrass and ginger-butter sauce; crisp Long Island duckling in an orange and Swedish lingonberry sauce, served with mixed wild rice and fresh vegetables; and herb-crusted roast tenderloin of pork with a cognac, green peppercorn and mushroom sauce, home style sweet potatoes and fresh vegetables. Lighter fare includes steamed Moroccan couscous and cracked black pepper linguine, while the dessert menu features chocolate Grand Marnier soufflé.

Open daily for lunch and dinner, 11 am-10:30 pm and till 11:30 pm Friday and Saturday. Breakfast served weekdays, 7-9:30 am; Sunday brunch, 11 am-2:30 pm. Reservations are recommended; highly recommended for the Sunday brunch.

In 1965, Ruth Fertel – a divorced mother of two – bought the local Chris Steak House in New Orleans and started a restaurant empire.

RUTH'S CHRIS STEAK HOUSE
2320 Salzedo Street
☎ 305-461-8360
Expensive

Ruth's Chris may a chain, but the attentive service and outstanding quality of food give the impression that the owner is watching the staff's every move. This is a meat-lover's nirvana, with a menu featur-

ing eight different cuts of beef, including New York strip, porterhouse and T-bone. Steaks arrive at the table still sputtering, a generous hunk of butter melting on top. The restaurant also serves a range of other meats, including lamb, roasted chicken, steamed Maine lobster and fish. Appetizers and salads include onion and lobster soups, crabmeat-stuffed mushrooms, seafood gumbo, salad of mixed field greens, and artichoke hearts with escargot. The standout dessert is a chocolate-chunk bread pudding; chocolate sin cake, pecan pie and seasonal berries in cream are other sweet treats. Open Sundays to Thursdays, 5-10 pm, and to 11 pm Fridays and Saturdays. Reservations are highly recommended.

TASCA LISBOA
2312 Ponce de Leon Boulevard
☎ 305-445-6001
Moderate-Expensive

Authentic Portuguese cuisine in a graceful Old World setting is served with warmth and friendliness at Tasca Lisboa. Continuing the tradition of the great Portuguese mariners of old, seafood is the dominant feature here, especially cod, a Portuguese staple. The *bacalao* (salt cod) appetizer starts you off, but there are a host of other tempting appetizers, including clams Tasca style in a tomato and fish stock base; clams in white wine sauce; grilled squid; shrimp in garlic sauce; and octopus salad with vinaigrette dressing.

The Portuguese are said to have 366 ways of preparing cod, one for every day of the year, including leap years, and at Tasca Lisboa you can try quite a few.

Salt cod as an entrée is prepared in a variety of ways, including grilled and drizzled with olive oil, shredded and served with onions and potatoes, and bathed in heavy cream sauce or port. Then there's *cataplana* for two, a slow-steamed concoction of salt

cod, shrimp, clams, onions, tomatoes, garlic, white wine and olive oil.

Other seafood entrées include fish stew and seafood rice, both flavored with jellyfish. Those who pass on seafood can feast on grilled pork, veal chops or chicken breast. Homemade desserts include creamy custard and baked cream tarts, though the latter are not always available. The perfect libation to accompany your meal? Port, of course. Open Tuesdays to Saturdays, noon-3 pm and 6-11 pm; Saturdays and Sundays, noon-11 pm. Closed Mondays. Reservations are recommend on weekends.

Kendall

CAPTAIN'S TAVERN
9621 South Dixie Highway
☎ 305-666-5979
Moderate

There's a two-for-one lobster special every Tuesday night at Captain's Tavern.

Nautical decor sets the mood for an evening of fresh seafood, served in hearty portions at reasonable prices. Ordering a bottle of wine won't break the bank, either – the restaurant's list of more than 600 labels has plenty of selections under $25. A broad menu of fish entrées includes yellowtail, snapper, pompano, dolphin and grouper, while lobster, bay scallops, conch and stone crabs are also offered. Most dishes are deliciously simple, though a few reflect the tropical touch, among them, a grilled dolphin filet topped with mixed tropical fruits and served on creamy black beans. Similarly, appetizers run from the exotic – sashimi tuna and Thai curried salmon with eggplant – to the traditional – Key West conch chowder and Maine lobster bisque. Landlubbers needn't fear – there are steaks and other meat choices as

well. Entrées come with salad and a side. A children's menu is available. Open Mondays-Saturdays, 11:30-3:30 pm and nightly for dinner, 5 pm-10 pm; until 11 pm Fridays and Saturdays.

FANCY'S
12313 South Dixie Highway
☎ 305-256-0056
Moderate

Going strong for 20 years, Fancy's offers a range of light fare and filling favorites. Specialties include such homestyle Italian fare as baked ziti, sausage and peppers, homemade linguine, fettucine and cappelini, and delicious spaghetti and meatballs. Other entrées include fried calamari, eggplant parmigiana, stir fried vegetables and veal prepared in a variety of ways. On the lighter side are salmon and snapper, shrimp salad, Greek salad, a fresh fruit platter, and a combination chicken, pineapple and pecan salad. Sandwiches of Genoa salami, prosciuto and turkey breast are prepared on homemade Italian bread. Open daily for lunch and dinner, 11 am-10 pm; Fridays and Saturdays until 11 pm.

Fancy's wine list contains nearly 800 labels.

LA COUPOLE
10855 SW 72 Street
☎ 305-271-4975
Inexpensive

For those unfamiliar with Haitian cuisine, it's flavorful and filling and, at times, vibrantly spicy. A variety of meat and seafood entrées include *cabrit nouveau*, a tender grilled goat steak; *boeuf a la mode*, a T-bone topped with green pepper and onion; and deep-fried whole snapper seasoned with garlic, lemon, salt and tabasco. Entrées are accompanied by an excellent house salad, white rice and tasty red

beans. Starters include *lambi grille*, conch in a spicy creole sauce; and a sampler platter of appetizers that includes chicken wings, fried pork chunks, conch fritters, fried plantains and malanga fritters. For dessert, there is sweet potato cake flavored by cream of coconut, vanilla and nutmeg. Open Mondays-Thursdays, 2-9 pm; Fridays and Saturdays, 2-11 pm.

LAN
8332 South Dixie Highway
☎ 305-661-8141
Moderate

Lan is located in the Dadeland Station mall of shops.

You'll find lots of creativity at this pan-Asian eatery, from seafood and green papaya salad to steak tataki served over wok-seared spinach. Entrées also include fried pork with egg and onions over rice; filet of salmon glazed with soy; and a dinner-size soup of pork tenderloin, tofu, cabbage, spinach and noodles in an intense chili broth. Starters include a variety of *satays* – skewers grilled over mini hibachis – and steamed soybeans. For dessert, try the spring rolls stuffed with pumpkin. Open Mondays-Saturdays, 11:30 am-3 pm and 5:30-10:30 pm; open Sundays, 1 pm-9:30 pm.

SHORTY'S BARBECUE
9200 South Dixie Highway
☎ 305-670-7732
Inexpensive

Shorty's Barbecue has been open since 1951.

You smell it before you actually see it – that dense, hickory scent that tells you someone is cooking up some ribs. Then there's Shorty's, housed in what looks like a cross between a log cabin and a barn. There's no air conditioning, but even in summer, the line is out the door. Patrons sit communal-style at

long wooden picnic tables, so you can get as messy as necessary to dig into the great barbecue specialties. The menu includes hickory-smoked chicken and ribs, mouth-watering cole slaw, corn on the cob dripping with butter, and homemade baked beans. Open daily for lunch and dinner, 11 am-10 pm, and until 11 pm Fridays and Saturdays. A newer, air-conditioned Shorty's is at 11575 SW 40th Street (Bird Road), ☎ 305-227-3196.

South Miami

CABALLO VIEJO
7921 SW 40th Street
☎ 305-264-8772
Inexpensive-Moderate

Service is friendly and the menu delightful at this small Venezuelan eatery located in a strip mall on Bird Road and SW 79th Avenue. Venezuelan cuisine has a number of influences, including Spanish and the many flavors of colonial South America. Among the Venezuelan specialties here are *pabellon criollo*, similar to the Cuban *ropa vieja*, shredded beef simmered in tomatoes and onions and served with white rice, black beans and fried sweet plantains. Other typical dishes include *hallaca*, a tasty tamal filled with chicken fricassee; and *patacon Maracucho*, a kind of plantain sandwich stuffed with avocado, chicken and grated cheese. Palomilla steak, seafood stew, fried snapper and pork chops are also offered. Desserts include *bien me sabe*, which translates as "it tastes good to me," a luscious blend of cake, sweet wine and coconut cream. Open daily for lunch and dinner, 11:30 am-10 pm; Fridays until 11 pm. Breakfast is served on Sundays from 10 am-noon.

Caballo Viejo (literally, "old horse") is a popular hangout for Miami's Venezuelan community.

FOX'S SHERRON INN
6030 South Dixie Highway
☎ 305-661-9201
Moderate

Fox's Sherron Inn opened in 1946.

Call it the restaurant that time forgot. A throwback to the '50s, Fox's smoky atmosphere, heavy furniture and menu of all-American favorites are a blast from the past. But it's not retro, it just hasn't changed much over the years. Dinner entrées include broiled pork chops, liver with grilled onions and bacon, chopped steak, New York strip steak with onion rings, and filet mignon. Seafood items range from scallops and fried fantail shrimp to broiled or pan-fried yellowtail, and a full seafood platter. Specials are offered nightly; on Tuesdays and Thursdays, it's prime rib roast, and Fridays it's a fresh fish fry. Most entrées are accompanied by soup, salad and two vegetables. And you can always get an incredibly good hamburger with fries and a side of cole slaw. Open Mondays-Saturdays, 11 am-2 am; Sundays 5 pm-midnight.

Homestead

EL TORO TACO
One Krome Avenue
☎ 305-245-8182
Moderate

This Homestead eatery is a good place to stop on your way to or from the Keys. Authentic Mexican specialties in hearty portions include chicken burritos, tacos, steak fajitas with onions and peppers, and *mole de pollo* – chicken glazed in a flavorful sauce. Open Tuesdays-Sundays for lunch and dinner, 11 am-9 pm; on Saturdays and Sundays, breakfast

is served from 10-11:30 am, followed by lunch and dinner. Closed Mondays.

Central West Miami

DISCO FISH
1540 SW 67th Avenue
West Miami
☎ 305-266-7323
Moderate

With its wooden-deck decor and nautical accents, Disco Fish looks like it belongs beside the ocean, not in the suburbs of western Miami. But name a fish and they probably serve it. Choices include whole snapper, grilled corvina, yellowtail, kingfish, blue marlin and dolphin. Seafood specialties include shrimp creole, a heaping seafood platter, and *arroz con mariscos*, a generous serving of yellow rice with clams, shrimp, mussels, fish and lobster. Entrées come with two sides, most Cuban style – yellow rice, mixed white rice and black beans, fried yuca and plantains, and plain old French fries. Appetizers range from steamed blue crab and conch fritters to the Disco Fish soup, a steaming cauldron filled with shrimp, squid, clams, mussels, scallops, octopus, lobster, conch and rice.

So where does the "disco" part come in? There's live music on the weekend, so get up and dance off dinner if you desire. Open daily, 10 am-10 pm, and until 11 pm on Saturdays.

A fish market is on the premises at Disco Fish.

LOS RANCHOS
Flagler Street & SW 107 Avenue
Sweetwater
☎ 305-221-9367
Moderate

This Nicaraguan steakhouse is a meat lover's paradise, and the *churrasco* and baby *churrasco* are its signature steaks, grilled to delicious perfection and served with three sauces – a blend of oil, parsley and garlic; a red pepper-based sauce with tomatoes and onions; or onions marinated with jalapeño peppers. The steaks come with sides of *gallo pinto* (red beans and rice) and fried plantains. Feel free to throw some sauce on them as well. Other Nicaraguan specialties include sautéed shrimp in a jalapeño pepper sauce; fried whole red snapper topped with an onion and tomato-based sauce; and tip filets in a creamy jalapeño sauce, while more familiar selections range from pepper steak and steak Diane to surf and turf. Open daily for lunch and dinner, 11:30 am-11 pm.

There are five Los Ranchos locations in Greater Miami.

The Flagler Street restaurant is the original Los Ranchos. Other locations include Bayside Marketplace, 401 Biscayne Boulevard, ☎ 305-375-0666; 2728 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, Coral Gables, ☎ 305-446-0050; Kendall Town & Country Mall, 8505 Mills Drive, Kendall, ☎ 305-596-5353; and The Falls Shopping Center, 8888 SW 136 Street, ☎ 305-238-6867.

OLD SAN JUAN
1200 SW 57th Avenue
West Miami
☎ 305-263-9911
Moderate

This restaurant takes you on an enchanting trip through Puerto Rican cuisine. Special dishes include roast pork with pigeon peas, rice and fried

plantains; chicken in garlic sauce with red beans and plantains; and churrasco steak served with salad and either fries or plantains. A spoonful of *pique*, Puerto Rican hot sauce, will add an extra shot of flavor to the rice and peas or steak. Appetizers include a hearty chicken soup, fried banana fritters, octopus salad and green banana fricassee, featuring a marinade of onion and green olive. Desserts include guava with cheese, flan and coconut custard. Open daily for lunch and dinner, 10 am-11 pm.

SABORES CHILENOS
10760 W Flagler Street
Sweetwater
☎ 305-554-4484
Inexpensive

This tiny restaurant offers a taste of Chile in dishes like *pescado frito*, a filet of fish coated in flour and egg, then fried until crunchy and served with white rice and a Chilean salad of tomatoes and onions in a light lime juice and oil dressing. The menu also features a variety of sandwiches and empanadas – small pies filled with cheese, chicken, beef, clams, or spinach with ricotta. Starters include *pastel de choclo*, a casserole of fresh-ground corn and beef, and *machas al Matico*, razor clams served in their juices with chopped onion and cilantro.

Northwest Miami

Miami Lakes

EL NOVILLO
15450 New Barn Road
☎ 305-757-0770
Moderate

Like Los Ranchos, El Novillo is a superior Nicaraguan steakhouse, offering delicious *churrasco* steaks in three sizes and other items from the *parrilla* (grill), including pork tenderloin and chicken churrasco. Various shrimp dishes, surf-and-turf and fried fresh tilapia round out the menu. After your entrée arrives, a server follows with a heaping platter of *gallo pinto* (red beans and rice), fried plantains, plantain chips and white rice, and you may choose what you want. The only problem here is you may be embarrassed to ask for as much as you really want.

If you choose an appetizer, the *Nica-tizer* sampler offers small tastes of different items. Other choices include corn tortilla soup, red bean soup and the Nica salad with shredded beef, pinto beans, onions, red peppers and corn over lettuce. For dessert, try the *tres leches*, a traditional confection of white cake and cream.

SHULA'S STEAKHOUSE
7601 Miami Lakes Drive
☎ 305-820-8102
www.donshula.com
Expensive-Very Expensive

Located at Don Shula's Hotel and Golf Club, this classic steakhouse – like its namesake – is a winner.

Using only certified Angus beef, steak entrées start at a 12-ounce filet mignon and get bigger from there, from a 20-ounce Kansas City sirloin to a 32-ounce prime rib. How carnivorous are you? If you answer "very," you might be able to join the club of diners who put away a 48-ounce porterhouse. Currently, the club has more than 10,000 members.

Though steaks dominate the menu, Shula's also offers live Maine lobster, Florida red snapper, mahimahi, Norwegian salmon, chicken breast, loin lamb chops and stone crabs in season. Sides include creamed spinach, broccoli with hollandaise sauce, fresh asparagus and, of course, baked potato. The calories continue at dessert, with seven-layer chocolate cake, chocolate souffle, vanilla cheesecake and red velvet cake among the choices.

Despite its sports theme, Shula's is quite elegant, with white linen tablecloths and rich woodwork. Football memorabilia is present but not overwhelming. The walls are hung with gold-framed photos and mementos, and the menus sport a textured football cover. Open weekdays for lunch from 11 am-2:30 pm, and nightly for dinner from 6-11 pm. Reservations are recommended. Another Shula's Steakhouse is on Miami Beach in the Alexander Hotel, 5225 Collins Avenue, ☎ 305-341-6565.

Shula's Steakhouse is owned by former Miami Dolphins coach Don Shula.

SHULA'S STEAK 2
15255 Bull Run Road
☎ 305-820-8047
Moderate

A more casual version of its upscale counterpart, Shula's Steak 2 is, at heart, a sports bar, with televisions broadcasting sporting events everywhere you look. The food, however, is tasty and plentiful, and in addition to standard pub fare, you'll find such spe-

cialties as steak fettucine, grilled chicken penne, and veggie rolls, along with a variety of steaks. Salads, sandwiches, burgers and fajitas are also offered, as well as hearty starters like loaded nachos, potato skins, spinach and artichoke dip, and Shula's steak soup. Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner from 6 am-10 pm. The bar stays open until midnight.

Airport Area

THE ATRIUM
8755 NW 36 Street
☎ 305-392-4899
Expensive

The Atrium is located at the Doral Golf Resort and Spa.

Elegant spa cuisine is served in a magnificent setting of limestone walls, stately columns and skylights at the Atrium. Delicious entrees for the health-conscious include jasmine tea-smoked sugarcane chicken; Chinese barbecue strip steak with jade sauce; and Caribbean grouper *en papillote*. For starters, the steamed oysters with plum wine and ginger vinaigrette are delectable. Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner, 7:30 am-10 am, 11:30 am-2:30 pm and 6-9 pm.

CISCO'S CAFE
5911 NW 36th Street
☎ 305-871-2764
www.ciscoscafe.com
Inexpensive-Moderate

Popular with locals for its nightly happy hours and great margaritas, this Mexican cantina near the airport offers an extensive menu of filling favorites, including a variety of, fajitas and chimichangas, along with create-your-own combination platters featur-

ing tacos, enchiladas, chile rellenos, tostados, tamales, and burritos. Complete dinners include beef or chicken flautas, *arroz con pollo* (chicken and rice), seafood-stuffed enchiladas and Mexican chicken parmesan. Most entrées are served with rice and refried beans. For the "gringo," there is New York steak and grilled chicken breast. A children's menu is available as well. Desserts include flan cheesecake, Kahlua mousse, and deep-fried ice cream. Open for lunch and dinner, Mondays-Thursdays 11 am-10 pm; Fridays and Saturdays until 11 pm. Open for dinner Sundays, 4-10 pm.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

The 94th Aero Squadron was one of the first US fighter squadrons to see combat service in World War I, and included pilot Eddie Rickenbacker, for whom Miami's Rickenbacker Causeway is named.

94TH AERO SQUADRON
1395 NW 57th Avenue
☎ 305-261-4220
Moderate

Housed in a picturesque replica of a World War I French farmhouse, 94th Aero Squadron offers a variety of seafood, beef and chicken specialties, including prime rib, rack of lamb, coconut shrimp, and chicken with grilled vegetables. Diners take in a south view of Miami International Airport and can watch takeoffs and landings, and even listen in to the control tower via headphones. Open daily for lunch and dinner, 11 am-11 pm; Fridays and Satur-

days until midnight. Early bird dinners are served 4:30-6:30 pm; Sunday brunch is from 10 am-3 pm.

After Dark

Miami is hot during the day... but things really heat up when the sun goes down and the clubs and dance floors gear up, starting at Miami's kingdom of the night – South Beach – and heading to points west. No matter how you prefer to party, you're invited to play the night away as the moon over Miami makes its way across the sky.

DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE IN FLORIDA

According to Florida law, a person is Driving Under the Influence (DUI) if he or she has a blood or breath alcohol level of .08% or more.

The penalties for the first DUI conviction may include any or all of the following.

- A $250 to $500 fine
- Imprisonment for up to six months
- Monthly reporting probation for a period not exceeding one year, with a requirement for a minimum of 50 hours of community service work (the total period of imprisonment plus probation may not exceed one year)
- Completion of an approved substance abuse course specified by the court (a re-

ferral to substance abuse treatment may be required in some cases)

- Revocation of the driver's license for at least 180 days and up to one year

If the offender has an alcohol level of .20% or greater, the possible fine is doubled to between $500 and $1,000 and the imprisonment increased to a period of up to nine months.

Subsequent DUI convictions result in increased fines and prison terms.

The legal drinking age in Florida is 21. Florida has **zero tolerance** for underage drinking and driving. Any person under the age of 21 found to have a blood alcohol level of only .02% or above, and who is in physical control of a motor vehicle, will automatically have their license suspended for six months.

South Beach

Dance Clubs

BASH
655 Washington Avenue
☎ 305-538-2274

This South Beach dance club features international music on Thursdays and progressive sounds Fridays and Saturdays. A deejay spins dance tunes on the outdoor patio. 21 and over only; strict dress code; cover charge. Open Thursdays-Sundays, 10 pm-5 am.

Bash offers an eclectic mix of events, including art exhibits and fashion/jewelry shows.

CAFE NOSTALGIA AT THE FORGE
432 41st Street
☎ 305-604-9895

Salsa the night away at Café Nostalgia, adjacent to The Forge restaurant. Music provided by deejay and live bands. Open nightly, 9 pm-6 am.

crobar
1445 Washington Avenue
☎ 305-532-0922

This former small movie theater (the Cameo Theatre) has been converted into a unique dance club, with progressive house music played by deejay and a regular schedule of live concerts. Open Thursdays-Mondays, 10 pm-5 am.

CLUB DEEP
621 Washington Ave
☎ 305-532-1509
www.clubdeep.com

Club Deep offers $2 drinks until midnight on Fridays.

"Dance on water" with Club Deep's sensational 2,000-gallon aquarium dance floor. Weekly theme nights including live radio broadcasts on Sundays when ladies drink free. 21 and older; dress code enforced on the weekends – no hats, shorts, sneakers tank tops or jerseys. Open Wednesdays-Sundays, 10 pm-5 am.

CRISTAL NIGHTCLUB
1045 5th Street
☎ 305-604-2582

Featuring a large dance floor and theme nights including Saturday's Latin Night and R&B Sundays. Dress to impress. Open Saturdays and Sundays, 10 pm-5 am.

LEVEL
1235 Washington Avenue
☎ 305-532-1525

This ample club features four dance floors on three levels, five happening rooms, nine bars and a 30-foot-tall glass-enclosed waterfall. Weekly events include Friday night Gay Pride party and Monday night funk and hip-hop. Level also hosts special events, including fashion shows. Open Thursdays-Mondays, 10 pm-5 am. For table reservations, call ☎ 305-531-0847 (0-VIP).

LIQUID
1439 Washington Ave
☎ 305-695-0338

Liquid offers two music rooms and regularly hosts a long list of the area's top deejays. Dress code strictly observed Fridays and Saturdays. Open Thursdays-Mondays, 11 pm-5 am.

Liquid is owned by Madonna's pal Ingrid Casares.

MISSION
637 Washington Avenue
☎ 305-534-9923

Mission boasts a large dance floor, a great sound system, three bars and an upstairs lounge. Thursday is an up-tempo, casual night; Friday is "sense art" night when music, theater and artwork are featured; on Tuesdays and Saturdays, dance to industrial and gothic music. Open Tuesdays and Thursdays-Saturdays, 11 pm-5 am.

At Mission, artists and their works are spotlighted on Fridays.

PUMP
841 Washington Avenue
☎ 305-538-7867

If you like to party for breakfast, stop by this after-hours club Saturday and Sunday mornings from

4 am to 9 am and dance to "underground" sounds spun by a deejay. There's no alcohol, but juice, bottled water and energy drinks are sold.

RICKY MARTIN'S CASA SALSA
524 Ocean Drive
☎ 305-604-5959

Opened in December 1998, Ricky Martin's Casa Salsa offers Puerto Rican/Spanish cuisine as well as salsa, mambo and cha-cha until dawn from January to May. Open daily, noon-11 pm; until 2 am Fridays and Saturdays.

SHADOW LOUNGE
1532 Washington Ave
☎ 305-531-9411
www.shadowlounge.com

This dance club has a European vibe and clientele, with top deejays from all over the world spinning power tunes. Regular theme nights. Open Thursdays-Sundays, 11 pm-5 am.

TIP

Hours of operation are subject to change; please call before you visit.

SPICE LOUNGE
928 71st Street
☎ 305-861-6707

Located six blocks west of Collins Avenue, Spice offers a warm, Moroccan ambience and hot music nightly except Mondays. Call for hours.

TWIST
1057 Washington Avenue
☎ 305-53-TWIST

Popular with locals and tourists, this two-story gay club boasts six different bars, a game room with pool tables and a dance floor with deejay. Open daily, 1 pm-5 am.

VIVID NIGHTCLUB
743 Washington Avenue
☎ 305-695-9299

High-energy Vivid is a quintessential South Beach club, with theme nights and special parties. Open Thursdays-Sundays, 11 pm-5 am. For table reservations, call ☎ 305-695-8687.

DRESS CODE FOR SOUTH BEACH CLUBS

- No sneakers
- No hats
- No jeans
- No sandals on men
- No heavy chains for men; in fact, men, wear as little jewelry as possible (those who wear excessive jewelry are sometimes considered trouble-makers).

TIP

Most dance clubs have a cover charge.

ZANZIBAR
615 Washington Ave
☎ 305-538-6688

Dance indoors or on Zanzibar's outdoor patio in the back. The club features regular weekly events. Open Tuesdays-Saturdays, 10 pm-5 am. Table reservations available.

Bars

CLEVELANDER
1020 Ocean Dr
☎ 305-531-3485

Four oceanfront outside bars and one indoor bar keep the drinks flowing, while a live band and deejay provide music for dancing. The fun starts around 9 pm and continues until 5 am.

FAT TUESDAY
918 Ocean Drive
☎ 305-534-1328
www.fat-tuesday.com

Outrageous frozen drinks include the Banana Banshee, Hurricane and Mudslide. Open daily, 11 am-1 am, later on the weekends. Other locations include CocoWalk, 3015 Grand Avenue, ☎ 305-441-2992; and Bayside Marketplace, 401 Biscayne Boulevard, ☎ 305-358-9555.

LOST WEEKEND
218 Española Way
☎ 305-672-1707

It's a great place to find yourself. Lost Weekend features pool, foosball, darts and video games. Open nightly, 5 pm-5 am.

PENROD'S BEACH CLUB
One Ocean Drive
☎ 305-538-1111
www.penrods.com

Kick off your shoes at Penrod's Barefoot Beach Café, serving a casual menu, tropical drinks and draft beers. Open daily, 11 am-11 pm.

WET WILLIE'S
760 Ocean Drive
☎ 305-532-5650

Sip cool frozen drinks on a balcony overlooking the ocean and enjoy tasty salads, sandwiches, steaks, pizzas and Southwestern specialties. Open daily, 11 am-2 am; until 3 am Fridays and Saturdays. No credit cards. Another location is in Coconut Grove at the Streets of Mayfair, ☎ 305-443-5060.

Jazz Clubs

JAZID
1342 Washington Avenue
☎ 305-673-9372

South Florida's top jazz musicians perform nightly. Open 9 pm-5 am. The band starts at 10:30 pm.

UPSTAIRS AT THE VAN DYKE
846 Lincoln Road
☎ 305-534-3600

Live jazz band nightly at 9 pm, Sundays to Thursdays, and 10 pm, Fridays and Saturdays. Downstairs, the Van Dyke Café serves sandwiches, omelettes and grilled entrées daily.

Supper Club

CLUB TROPIGALA
4441 Collins Avenue
☎ 305-672-7469 or 800-346-8455
www.clubtropigala.com

Located in the Fontainebleau Hilton Resort and Towers, Club Tropigala presents lavish, Vegas-style revues featuring dancers, singers and international novelty acts. The elegant showroom offers multi-tier seating so that everyone has an unobstructed view.

CLUB TROPIGALA HISTORY

Club Tropigala was formerly La Ronde Room, *the* hot spot during Miami Beach's heyday in the '50s and '60s. Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis, Jr., Ann Miller and Tony Bennett were frequent performers. Recent headliners have included Julio Iglesias, Gloria Estefan, and José Feliciano, and special events have included a number of international beauty pageants. The club also served as a backdrop for the film *The Bodyguard*, starring Kevin Costner and Whitney Houston, and has been patronized by the likes of Madonna, Sylvester Stallone, John Travolta and Rosie O'Donnell.

While taking in the show, guests may dine on a sumptuous menu that includes seafood, beef, veal, lamb and pork entrées as well as soups, salads, appetizers and desserts. There is even a tapas menu. Before and after the show, a 10-piece orchestra plays music for dancing. Showtimes are Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays at 8:30 pm, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm. Call for current show information.

Downtown Miami

Bars

BAYSIDE MARKETPLACE
401 Biscayne Boulevard
☎ 305-577-3344

With live entertainment every weekend – and most weeknights – on its bayfront stage, Bayside is a great place to go for a drink and a stroll by the water while taking in a variety of different bands and performers. Bars include **Snapper's** (☎ 305-379-0605), **Fat Tuesday** (☎ 305-358-9555), **Hooters** (☎ 305-371-3004), and **Let's Make a Daiquiri**, where skilled bartenders whip up frozen drinks in blenders while you watch, (☎ 305-372-5152). Bayside is also home to the **Hard Rock Café**, with its own bar and scheduled entertainment (☎ 305-377-3110). Bars are open till 11 pm weekdays and midnight Friday and Saturday; Hooters is open week nights till midnight and till 2 am on Friday and Saturday.

FIREHOUSE FOUR
1000 South Miami Avenue
☎ 305-371-3473

As its name implies, Firehouse Four is housed in a converted firehouse.

Famous for its smoking happy hours, especially on Fridays, this local yuppie watering hole offers 17 well-stocked bars, an outdoor patio and tiki bar, and a stage where bands help keep the atmosphere lively. Traditional American fare is served daily for lunch and dinner, 11:30 am-midnight. Happy hour, featuring $1 off well drinks and imported beers, runs from 5-7 pm, Monday through Saturday.

TOBACCO ROAD
626 South Miami Avenue
☎ 305-374-1198

You can feel the vibe from the days when the "Road," the oldest bar in Miami, was an illegal speakeasy. Today, it's a funky, laid-back restaurant and bar serving burgers, sandwiches, soups and salads. The kitchen stays open late for night owls. Live blues, jazz and rock nightly. A smoky upstairs room also features live entertainment Thursdays to Saturdays. Open daily, 11:30 am-5 am.

Northeast Miami

Dance Clubs

BERMUDA BAR
3509 NE 163rd Street
North Miami Beach
☎ 305-945-0196

Bermuda Bar has a restaurant on-site.

This multi-level dance club boasts a great light show plus theme nights, including live comedy on Tues-

days, and salsa and merengue on Thursdays. Bermuda also hosts regular promotional events with local radio and TV stations. They are open Tuesdays-Saturdays, 8 pm-6 am; Friday happy hour is from 5-8 pm. Bermuda Bar's restaurant is open Tuesdays, 7 pm-2 am; Thursdays and Saturdays, 8 pm-6 am; and Fridays, 5 pm-6 am, serving burgers, sandwiches, chips and salsa, chicken wings, and the like.

BROADWAY BILLIARDS
17813 Biscayne Boulevard
Aventura
☎ 305-931-1900

This night spot is part dance club, part bar with billiards. Live blues band on Wednesdays. Thursday is college night. A deejay spins dance tunes Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Open daily at 3 pm, and the party continues all night.

Broadway Billiards features Sunday pool tournaments.

Bar

CHURCHILL'S HIDEAWAY
5501 NE 2nd Avenue
Little Haiti
☎ 305-757-1807

Churchill's is a true English pub featuring bar food and a large selection of beers. Enjoy British TV, billiards and live entertainment nightly ranging from rock to pop and "indie" music. Open Mondays-Saturdays, 11 am-3 am; open at noon on Sundays.

Satellite TV at Churchill's broadcasts British programs, including rugby on the weekends.

Jazz Club

CHAMPAGNE'S
1060 NE 79th Street Causeway
North Bay Village
☎ 305-754-6036

This restaurant and jazz lounge serves up authentic Creole cuisine and pure jazz music. Open Fridays and Saturdays, 6 pm-2 am, and until midnight on Sundays.

Coconut Grove

Dance Clubs

IGUANA CANTINA
3390 Mary Street
☎ 305-444-8081

Located in the Streets of Mayfair, Iguana Cantina is one of Coconut Grove's hottest dance clubs, playing the latest music on a state-of-the-art sound system. Happy hours and dance nights feature live broadcasts from a local radio station. Open Tuesdays-Sundays, 4 pm-5 am.

THE CHILI PEPPER
3300 Mary Street
☎ 305-442-2228

The Chili Pepper is located underground at the Streets of Mayfair.

The deejay spins hip-hop and reggae. Live hip-hop band also featured on Sundays. Ages 18 and over are welcome on Saturdays. Open nightly, 9 pm-5 am.

CLUB 609
3342 Virginia Street
☎ 305-444-6096

Three rooms feature salsa, merengue and dance music. Theme nights include hip-hop on Thursdays from 10 pm and an open bar until midnight. On Fridays it's ladies night; gals get in free until midnight and drink free until 1 am. On Saturdays, it's a salsa party and everyone gets in free with free drinks until 11 pm.

Bar

TAVERN IN THE GROVE
3416 Main Highway
☎ 305-447-3884

Not trendy or overpriced – just a great place to have a drink. Open daily, 3 pm-3 am.

Jazz Club

MARTINI BAR
3390 Mary Street
☎ 305-444-5911

This hip, upscale lounge boasts live jazz, with room for dancing if you desire. A full bar serves martinis, among other things. Open Wednesdays and Thursdays at 8 pm, Fridays at 5 pm and Saturdays at 9 pm. Closing time is 5 am.

Martini Bar has a Friday two-for-one happy hour from 5 pm-9 pm.

Comedy Club

IMPROV COMEDY CLUB
2911 Grand Avenue
☎ 305-441-8200

Urban comedy is featured on Mondays and Tuesdays at the Improv.

Laugh along with nationally known comics. Mondays and Tuesdays are Def Comedy Jam nights, while a headliner comic performs Wednesdays-Sundays. Showtimes are 8:30 pm Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays; 8 pm and 10:30 pm Tuesdays; 9 pm and 11 pm Fridays; 7:45 pm, 10 pm and midnight Saturdays. Walk-up, or reserve tickets over the phone. Located at the Streets of Mayfair, 3rd level.

Coral Gables

Dance Club

ALCAZABA
50 Alhambra Plaza
☎ 305-441-1234

A hangout for young professionals, Alcazaba, located in the Hyatt Regency Coral Gables, sizzles with the sounds of Top 40, salsa and disco. Open Wednesdays, 5:30-8:30 pm for happy hour, then stays open until 3:30 am. Fridays and Saturdays, open 10 pm-3:30 am. Ladies 18 and over welcome Fridays and Saturdays; guys must be 21. No jeans or tennis shoes.

Bar

JOHNMARTIN'S
253 Miracle Mile
☎ 305-445-3777

Casual Irish pub grub like shepherd's pie and corned beef is served along with beer and more beer. An Irish singer performs Friday nights, while a small Irish band takes over Saturday nights. Open daily, 11:30 am-11:30 pm; until 1 am Fridays and Saturdays.

South Miami

Dance Club

CAFE IGUANA
8505 Mills Drive
Kendall
☎ 305-274-4948

A veteran of the South Dade party scene, Café Iguana has a little something for everyone. Sunday is country night, Mondays and Tuesdays Top 40, Wednesday is Latin night, Thursday and Friday are disco/pop with live radio broadcasts, and Saturday is Top 40. Two-step lessons are offered Mondays before the joint really starts jumping. Two bars; pool tables upstairs. Open nightly, 5 pm-5 am. Located at Kendall Town & Country Mall.

Bars

KEG SOUTH
10417 South Dixie Highway
Pinecrest
☎ 305-284-9296

This laid-back neighborhood pub and sports bar serves great burgers and wings. Special events include a Wednesday night pool tournament and Monday night football raffles. Open weekdays, 11 am-1 am; until 2 am; Fridays and Saturdays; noon-11 pm Sundays.

SCULLY'S TAVERN
9809 Sunset Drive
Kendall
☎ 305-271-7404

Serving lunch and dinner; regular live entertainment, but call for details. Open daily, 11 am-1 am; until 3 am Fridays and Saturdays.

HOOLIGAN'S PUB
9555 South Dixie Highway
Kendall
☎ 305-667-9673

Located in Dadeland Plaza, Hooligan's serves lunch and dinner daily, with live entertainment Friday and Saturday nights. Hooligans are welcome. Open 11 am-4 am.

Comedy Club

RASCALS COMEDY CLUB
8505 Mills Drive
Kendall Town & Country Mall
☎ 305-274-5411

A night of hilarity awaits at Rascals. Shows Thursdays and Sundays at 8:30 pm; Fridays at 8:30 pm and 11 pm; Saturdays at 8 pm and 10:30 pm.

Airport Area

Dance Club

CLUB MYSTIQUE
5101 Blue Lagoon Drive
☎ 305-265-3900

Located in the Miami Airport Hilton and Towers, Latin-flavored Club Mystique hosts a number of regular events, including Japanese Thursdays, Friday happy hour and Salsa Saturdays. Open Thursdays-Sundays until the wee hours.

Club Mystique has a free sushi bar on Thursdays from 5-8 pm.

Miami A to Z

Area Code

The area code for Greater Miami is **305**, and you must dial 305 before the phone number in Miami. Area code **786** (SUN) was introduced July 1, 1998 for numbers added after that date.

Banks

Bank of America (☎ 800-299-2265), **First Union** (☎ 800-275-3862), **SunTrust** (☎ 800-786-8787) and **Union Planters Bank** (☎ 877-848-2265) have numerous locations throughout Greater Miami.

County

Miami-Dade

Dentists

Dental Referral Services
(for the dentist nearest you) . . . . . ☎ 800-577-7317

Beach Dental Center
1370 Washington Ave.
Miami Beach . . . . . ☎ 305-532-3300

Kmart Dental Office
900 NE 167th Street
North Miami Beach . . . . . ☎ 305-947-9001

Pablo Fonseca, DDS
(open late and on Saturdays, and for emergencies)

4560 NW 7th Street
Miami (airport area) . . . . . ☎ 305-444-8863

South Florida Dental Association
(for referrals)
420 South Dixie Highway
Coral Gables . . . . . ☎ 305-667-3647

Emergency Phone Numbers

Any life-threatening emergency . . . . . ☎ 911

Police

Bal Harbour . . . . . ☎ 305-866-5000
City of Miami. . . . . ☎ 305-579-6111
Coral Gables . . . . . ☎ 305-442-1600
Hialeah. . . . . ☎ 305-687-2525
Hialeah Gardens . . . . . ☎ 305-558-3333
Homestead. . . . . ☎ 305-247-1535
Indian Creek. . . . . ☎ 305-866-2446
Key Biscayne. . . . . ☎ 305-365-5555
Miami Beach . . . . . ☎ 305-673-7900
Miami-Dade Police . . . . . ☎ 305-4POLICE
Miami Springs . . . . . ☎ 305-888-9711
North Bay Village. . . . . ☎ 305-758-2626
North Miami . . . . . ☎ 305-891-8111
North Miami Beach . . . . . ☎ 305-949-5500
Opa-Locka . . . . . ☎ 305-953-2877
Pinecrest . . . . . ☎ 305-234-2100
South Miami . . . . . ☎ 305-663-6301
Surfside . . . . . ☎ 305-861-4862
West Miami . . . . . ☎ 305-266-0530

Hospitals

Aventura Hospital and Medical Center
20900 Biscayne Boulevard
Aventura . . . . . ☎ 305-682-7000

Baptist Hospital
8900 North Kendall Drive
South Miami . . . . . ☎ 305-596-1960

Jackson Memorial Hospital
1611 NW 12th Avenue
Miami. . . . . ☎ 305-585-1111

HealthSouth Doctors' Hospital
5000 University Drive
Coral Gables . . . . . ☎ 305-666-2111

Mercy Hospital
3663 South Miami Avenue
Coconut Grove . . . . . ☎ 305-854-4400

Mount Sinai Medical Center
4300 Alton Road
Miami Beach . . . . . ☎ 305-674-2121

South Miami Hospital
6200 SW 73rd Street
South Miami . . . . . ☎ 305-661-4611

Houses of Worship

Nearly every religious denomination is represented in the Greater Miami area. Consult the Yellow Pages for specific information.

Archdiocese of Miami, 9401 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami Shores, ☎ 305-757-6241 (Information and referral)

Greater Miami Jewish Federation, 4200 Biscayne Boulevard, ☎ 305-576-4000 (Information and referral)

Newspapers

Miami's daily newspaper is ***The Miami Herald*** and its Spanish counterpart, ***El Nuevo Herald***. The ***Daily Business Review*** covers local business, real estate and law. The daily, Fort Lauderdale-

based ***Sun Sentinel*** is also widely available. The weekly ***New Times*** is a great read, with its irreverent take on local issues and politics.

Pharmacies

Walgreens has numerous locations throughout Miami, with seven stores open 24 hours. Call ☎ 800-925-4733 for the store nearest you.

Eckerd stores, ☎ 800-325-3737, are also plentiful in Greater Miami, along with **Fedco**, ☎ 305-865-4482, and **Valu-Rite**, www.valu-rite.com.

Photo Labs

Eckerd Express Photo Centers, ☎ 800-325-3737, and **Walgreens** photo labs, ☎ 800-925-4733, have multiple locations throughout Greater Miami.

Camera Capers
1060 Brickell Avenue . . . . . ☎ 305-374-6660

Coconut Grove Camera
3317 Virginia Street . . . . . ☎ 305-445-0521

Tropicolor
1442 Alton Road, Miami Beach. . . . ☎ 305-672-3720

Post Offices

Post offices are open weekdays, 7:30 am-5 pm. On Saturdays, hours vary. Opening is betwen 7:30 and 8:30 am, and closing is generally by 2 pm.

Post Office Answer Line
(24 hours). . . . . ☎ 800-275-8777

Coconut Grove
3191 Grand Avenue. . . . . ☎ 305-599-1750
Coral Gables
251 Valencia Avenue . . . . . ☎ 305-599-1795
Key Biscayne
951 Crandon Boulevard . . . . . ☎ 305-599-1775
Miami Beach
1300 Washington Avenue . . . . . ☎ 305-599-1787
Surfside
250 95th Street . . . . . ☎ 305-639-5520

Public Transportation

Electrowave

The South Beach Express . . . . . ☎ 305-843-9283

Metrobus, Metrorail, Metromover

Transit Information . . . . . ☎ 305-770-3131
Lost & Found. . . . . ☎ 305-375-3366
Maps by Mail . . . . . ☎ 305-770-3131
Special Transportation Services
(STS) . . . . . ☎ 305-263-5400

Trains

Amtrak . . . . . ☎ 800-USA-RAIL (872-7245)
TriRail . . . . . ☎ 800-TRI-RAIL (874-7245)

Useful Phone Numbers

Florida's State Operator
Directory Assistance . . . . . ☎ 305-325-2500

Miami Beach Tourist Hotline
Information number . . . . . ☎ 305-673-7400

Time of Day Service . . . . . ☎ 305-324-8811

Weather Bureau . . . . . ☎ 305-229-4522

Walk-in Clinics

Around the Clock Medical Center
1380 NE Miami Gardens Drive. . . . ☎ 305-940-9300

Miami Springs Ambulatory Clinic
230 Park Street . . . . . ☎ 305-888-2607

Pan American/CAC Medical Centers
South Miami-Dade County
18623 South Dixie Highway . . . . . ☎ 305-238-9111
Southwest Miami-Dade County (open 24 hours)
10431 Bird Road . . . . . ☎ 305-222-2000
Miami Beach
1070 Alton Road . . . . . ☎ 305-531-2000
North Miami Beach
1701 NE 164th Street . . . . . ☎ 305-949-2000
North Miami-Dade County
6544 NW 186th Street. . . . . ☎ 305-556-2800

Sigma Medical Center
1773 SW 8th Street . . . . . ☎ 305-643-3412

The Florida Keys

The Great Escape

Leaving the US mainland and entering the Florida Keys, there ought to be a sign reading "Leave your worries at the door," because that's how you feel when you catch a glimpse of the azure-and-turquoise waters surrounding this 125-mile island chain. It's instant relaxation therapy, and you'll want to roll down the car windows and let the sunshine and sea breeze wash over you like a tonic.

Suddenly, the big-city bustle of Miami, just minutes to the north, feels a thousand miles away, and you'll understand why some refer to the Keys as "America's Caribbean."

Because of their geographical isolation from the mainland, the Keys have long been perceived as a sort of haven or refuge from the "real world," drawing a long list of assorted dreamers and adventurers, tycoons and paupers, famous and infamous. Once the Overseas Highway was completed in 1938, the Keys opened up to the rest of the country, and the tourists began flocking in.

Visitor numbers increased during the last quarter-century, following the explosive growth of nearby Greater Miami. Today, at certain times of the year, especially in Key West, the tourists outnumber the locals. Yet the spirit of the Conch Republic never gets lost. In fact, visitors often find themselves emulating this laid-back attitude, becoming "Conchs" themselves during their stay.

THE CONCH REPUBLIC

On April 23, 1982, the Florida Keys unofficially seceded from the United States in response to a US Border Patrol blockade erected on US-1 at Florida City, just north of the Florida Keys. Keys residents were forced to show proof of citizenship before being allowed to enter the Florida mainland. So as a form of protest, they created their own "nation" – the **Conch Republic**. The secession ceremony included breaking a stale loaf of Cuban bread over the head of a man dressed in a Navy uniform. Today, residents of the Conch Republic, who are known for short as "Conchs", hold dual citizenship, and celebrate their secession during an annual festival held in April.

Attractions

Some visiting "Conchs" find a beach and park themselves for the duration. Others immerse themselves in a waterworld of activities, from snorkeling and diving the only living coral reef in the continental US to fishing the waters that are home to more trophy-winning fish than any other destination in the world. Some seek the thrill of speed over the water, and a wealth of boat, personal watercraft, and windsurfing rentals allows them to indulge their passion. Others prefer the more languid pace of kayaking or canoeing. Then again, some just want to sit back and take in the expansive beauty of Florida Bay and the Atlantic Ocean while a charter captain steers them on a day or evening excursion.

Sightseeing is usually on most visitors' agendas, and the Keys are home to an exciting variety of attractions, from dolphin research centers and marine life parks to attractions and museums highlighting the islands' fascinating history. Guided tours can also point the way to important and interesting historical sites.

Dining & Shopping

Dining is almost always casual in the Keys.

Like everything else in the Keys, dining is easygoing and never pretentious, although there are many first-class restaurants. At some point during your trip, you'll probably find yourself at a bayside or oceanside table, surrounded by the very waters that were home to your dinner that morning. Fresh seafood is definitely a given in the Keys. And when it comes to shopping, be prepared to go home with more luggage than you brought. Irresistible souvenir shops and stands line the Overseas Highway, while in Key West, eclectic boutiques and galleries sell items we guarantee you will not find anywhere else.

Accommodations

Choosing your accommodations may present more of a challenge, as the Keys are home to an incredible variety of lodgings, from lavish vacation resorts and full-service hotels to dedicated dive resorts, secluded cottages and efficiency-style retreats. Best of all, waterfront hotels are the rule – rather than the exception – along the Overseas Highway, with dining and attractions usually within walking distance or a short drive away. In Key West, a number of proper-

ties are waterfront as well, with another large portion set among the island's historic and cultural attractions. Among the latter are a variety of quaint guesthouses and bed-and-breakfast inns.

Winter and spring are high season in the Florida Keys, when hotel rates average 20% to 30% higher than in summer and fall, although some hotels have higher summer rates as well.

Orientation

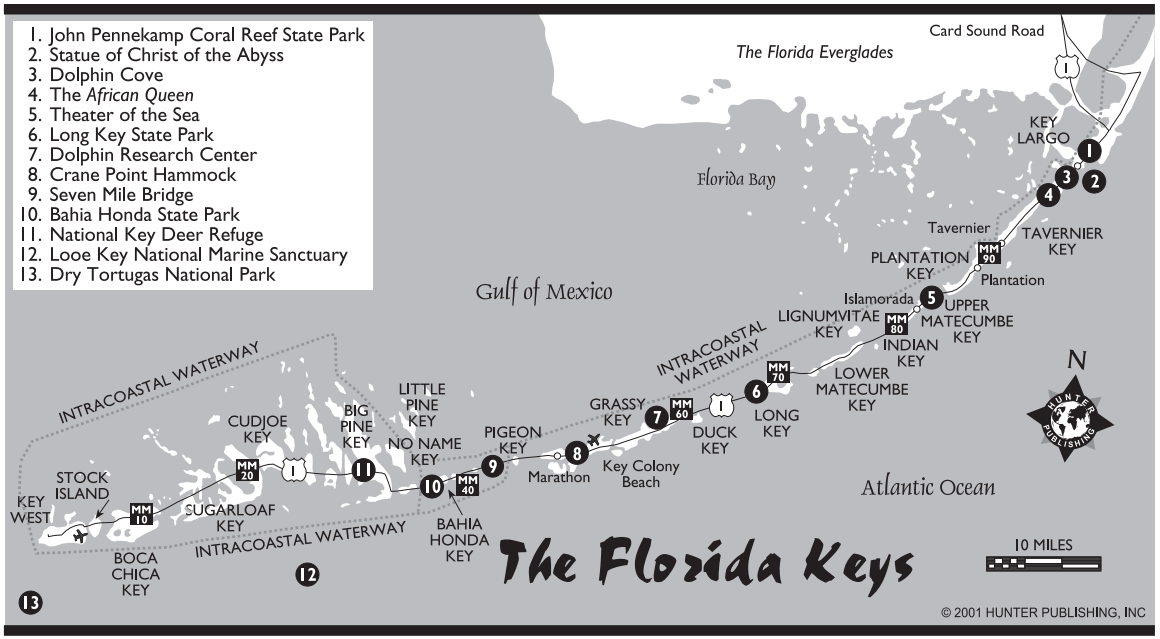
The Florida Keys are made up of countless coral reef and limestone islands, some large enough to sustain cities, others nothing more than small mangrove islets. Extending from South Florida, the Keys don't head due south, but curve gently away from the mainland in a southwesterly direction.

Upper Keys

The islands of Key Largo and Islamorada comprise the Upper Keys.

Key Largo

First and longest of the Keys is Key Largo (MM 106-91), bordered on the west by Florida Bay and the backcountry of Everglades National Park, and to the east by the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf Stream. Key Largo gained a romantic aura when it was featured in the 1947 movie classic of the same name, starring Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall. Today, the bar featured in a number of the movie's scenes, the



The Florida Keys

Caribbean Club, is still open. Another Bogey classic, *The African Queen*, comes to life at the Holiday Inn Key Largo marina, where the boat featured in the movie is on display seasonally.

Key Largo is also famed as the site of **John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park**, the first underwater park in the US, whose 55 varieties of coral and 500 species of fish make for some of the best diving and snorkeling in the world. The park also offers sunset, eco-tours and glass-bottom boat tours, nature trails, a beach, camping, and canoeing. Key Largo counts sportfishing, beaches, dolphin encounter facilities and an underwater hotel among its many other attractions.

Islamorada

Following Key Largo is the group of islands known as Islamorada (MM 91-65), or "purple isles," a name bestowed by the Spanish, who were enamored of the islands' violet sea snails and purple bougainvillea flowers. Encompassing **Plantation**, **Windley**, **Upper** and **Lower Matecumbe Key**, and **Long Key**, Islamorada is known as the "Sportfishing Capital of the World," and it's no idle boast. Ernest Hemingway, Zane Grey and Harry Truman all fished Islamorada's waters and today, the area boasts the Keys' largest fleet of offshore charter boats and shallow-water back-country boats.

Islamorada is also home to some great reef and wreck diving, as well as tennis facilities, bicycle trails, historic walks, ecotours, dolphin-themed attractions, and a state park, the **Long Key State Recreation Area**, loaded with activities such as camping, canoeing, nature trails, a beach and picnic grounds.

Middle Keys

Next along the Overseas Highway are the Middle Keys, made up of **Conch Key**, **Duck Key**, **Grassy Key**, the **Crawl Keys**, **Key Colony Beach**, **Key Vaca**, **Fat Deer Key**, **Knight's Key** and **Pigeon Key**. Together, they make up the islands of **Marathon** (MM 63-47), mid-point of the Florida Keys, an hour's drive from both Key West and Key Largo. Throughout the region, visitors will find opportunities to swim with dolphins, explore hardwood hammocks and rainforests, stroll white-sand beaches, and enjoy abundant watersports activities. Sportfishing, diving and snorkeling are also popular activities, along with golf, tennis, local theater and unique dining opportunities.

Lower Keys

The Seven Mile Bridge separates the Middle Keys from the Lower Keys (MM 40-5), which lead off with **Sunshine Key** and end at **Stock Island**. Known as the "Natural Keys," the Lower Keys are home to a number of wildlife areas, including the **National Key Deer Refuge** on Big Pine Key, the offshore **Looe Key National Marine Sanctuary**, the **Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge** and **Bahia Honda State Park**, featuring camping, picnicking, watersports and one of the top beaches in the country. Here's another interesting wildlife site – **Perky's Bat Tower**, located at MM 17 (B) on Sugarloaf Key, built in 1929 as an attempt to control the mosquito population.

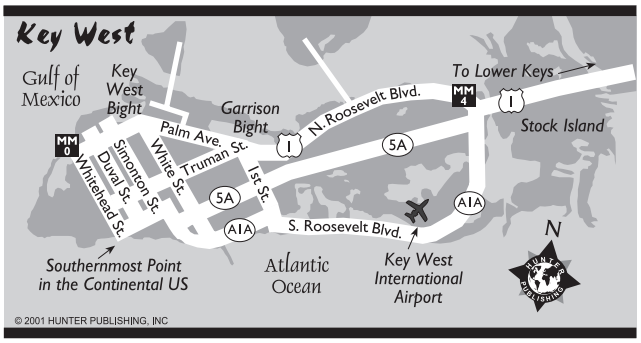
A KEY TO THE KEYS

- **Key Largo**, first and longest of the Keys, is home to John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park.
- **Islamorada** is known as the "Sportfishing Capital of the World."
- **Marathon** is an hour's drive from both Key West and Key Largo.
- The **Lower Keys** are home to a number of wildlife refuges.
- Geographically, **Key West** is closer to Cuba than to the US mainland.

Key West

At the end of the road – or the beginning, depending on how you look at it – is fantastic, eccentric, exciting Key West (MM 4-0), geographically tiny but packed with enough history, attractions, cultural activities, nightlife and watersports to keep visitors busy for weeks. Located closer to Cuba than the US, Key West is the country's independent, irreverent subtropical paradise, with a balmy climate and anything-goes ambience that have long provided a haven for writers, artists and free-spirits.

Among those who have sought solace, solitude and inspiration in Key West are Ernest Hemingway, Tennessee Williams, Robert Frost and Jimmy Buffett. Even President Harry Truman retreated to Key West to relax and rejuvenate.



The not-so-famous have also discovered Key West as a paradise of unlimited opportunity – among them, Bahamian wreckers, commercial fishermen, sponge fishermen and Cuban cigar makers. Today, Key West's Bahamian and Cuban heritage is represented throughout the island in restaurants, cigar shops, museums and accommodations.

Another important facet of Key West's history is its military legacy, spotlighted in a number of Civil War-era forts, including **Fort Zachary Taylor** on the island's west side, **East Martello Tower** and **West Martello Tower** on the south shore, and Fort Jefferson, located 68 miles off Key West in the Dry Tortugas.

Today's visitors to Key West can follow the pathways of the past while enjoying such modern diversions as game fishing, diving and club-hopping the fabled bars and saloons of **Duval Street**. Not to be missed is the daily sunset celebration at **Mallory Square**, featuring such street performers as flame swallowers, tightrope walkers, mimes and other assorted characters.

1. Sunset Pier
2. Mallory Square
3. Chamber of Commerce
4. Key West Museum of Art at the US Custom House
5. Mel Fisher Maritime Museum
6. Historic Seaport & Boardwalk
7. Curry Mansion
8. Oldest House Museum
9. Heritage House Museum & Robert Frost Cottage
10. Audubon House & Garden
11. Harry S. Truman Little White House & Museum
12. Fort Zachary Taylor Entrance
13. Key West Cemetery
14. Hemingway House & Museum
15. Key West Lighthouse Museum
16. Southernmost Point in the Continental US
17. West Martello Tower
18. East Martello Museum

Gay Key West

With its laid-back ambience and "come as you are" spirit, Key West is a popular vacation destination for gay and lesbian travelers. In fact, about a quarter of the island's year-round population of 35,000 is gay, and gay residents currently hold many promi-

nent civic positions, including city commissioner and chamber of commerce president.

In addition to the things that attract everyone to Key West – the weather, the history, the nightlife, and shopping – gay and lesbian travelers are drawn to local events celebrating sexual diversity such as the annual Rainbow Colors Ball, WomenFest, and the kick-off to Fantasy Fest, the Headdress Ball. While most of the island's guesthouses are "all welcome" – meaning that anyone, regardless of sexual preference, is invited to stay – there are a number of men- and women-only guesthouses. Call the **Key West Business Guild** for specific information at ☎ 305-294-4603 or 888-294-4603, or visit their Web site at www.gaykeywestfl.com.

Getting Here

Whether you're driving, flying or boating in, the Florida Keys are only miles away in spirit.

By Air

Key West welcomes scheduled air service from most major US airports, via connections.

Key West International Airport (☎ 305-296-5439) is served by **American Eagle** (☎ 800-433-7300), **Cape Air** (☎ 305-293-0603), **Comair** (the Delta Connection, ☎ 800-354-9822), **Gulfstream International Airlines** (the Continental Connection and United Express, ☎ 800-992-8532), and **US Airways Express** (☎ 800-428-4322).

Marathon International Airport (☎ 305-743-2155) is served by **Florida Air** (☎ 305-743-2155), offering seven daily, one-stop flights (Fort Myers or Fort

Lauderdale) from their Sarasota hub; and by **Vintage Props & Jets** (☎ 800-852-0275), with service from Daytona, New Smyrna Beach and Melbourne.

Rental cars are available at both Keys airports and other locations; see *Getting Around*, pages 285 and 287, for details.

Facilities are also available at both Keys airports to accommodate visitors traveling in private aircraft.

By Water

Ferry Services

Weather permitting, the Keys are accessible via ferry from Fort Myers Beach and Marco Island, both on Florida's southwest coast.

X-Press to Key West offers high-speed ferry service year-round from Fort Myers Beach to the Port of Key West. At press time, the 4½-hour trip departed Fort Myers at 7:45 am and left Key West at 5:30 pm. The fare is $119 round trip; if you wish, you may stay overnight in Key West and take the next ferry back at no extra charge. ☎ 800-273-4496. www.atlantisexpress.com.

Another ferry service between Key West and Fort Myers Beach is the **Key West Shuttle**, ☎ 888-539-2628. The round-trip fare is $119.

Operating daily between Marco Island and Key West is the **Key West Water Express**. At press time, the three-hour trip departed Marco Island at 9 am and left Key West at 5 pm. Service is seasonal, running from November through early May. ☎ 800-650-KEYS. The fare is $114 per person, round trip.

Cruises

If you're taking a cruise and want to call at Key West, the **Port of Key West** is served by **Carnival**, **Celebrity**, **Costa Cruises**, **Holland America**, **Norwegian Cruise Line**, and **Royal Caribbean Cruise Line.**

By Road

A variety of ground transportation options will also get you to the Keys. **Greyhound Lines**' Florida Keys Shuttle offers daily service from Miami International Airport (MIA) to Key West International Airport for $32. At press time, there were three buses daily each way, with additional service on weekends; call for exact schedules, ☎ 305-296-9072 or 800-231-2222. Buses make stops throughout the Keys during the five-hour trip. Greyhound also has locations near the Fort Lauderdale (FTL) and Palm Beach (PBI) airports. From Fort Lauderdale, the fare is $36, and from Palm Beach it is $41 (Greyhound's weekend rates may be slightly higher for all trips).

Go Tour Airport Shuttle in Marathon (☎ 305-743-8446 or 800-689-3304) provides transportation by bus or van between the Keys and either MIA or FTL. The fare is $29.90 for Marathon to Miami, and $39.90 from Marathon to Fort Lauderdale.

Based in north Key Largo, **Luxury Limousines of the Florida Keys** (☎ 800-664-0124) provides service into or out of the Keys. They can pick you up at MIA or any hotel and drop you off at the Keys destination of your choice. Transportation is in a limou-

sine or sedan. Fares range from $120 to $210, depending on the distance and your choice of vehicle.

Another option is **SuperShuttle** (☎ 305-871-2000 or 800-874-8885) offering van transportation from MIA to any location in the Keys; fares range from $150 to $350, according to your destination.

Finally, you may decide to drive, either from your home or by flying into MIA or FTL and renting a car. Either way, your route will be "The Highway That Goes To Sea."

The Overseas Highway

An alternative for driving into the Keys from Miami is Card Sound Road, a toll road that leads from the Florida City/Homestead area to SR 905 on the north end of Key Largo. It is generally less congested than US-1.

By road, there's only one way in or out of the Keys – the Overseas Highway, sometimes called the "highway that goes to sea" – a scenic extension of US-1 from Miami. The road follows the same trail blazed in 1912 when Standard Oil magnate Henry Flagler extended his Florida East Coast Railroad from Miami to Key West (the railroad was subsequently destroyed in a 1935 hurricane).

Construction of the highway began in the late 1930s, incorporating some of the original railway spans as well as the coral bedrock of individual Keys and specially constructed columns. At the time of its completion in 1938, the Overseas Highway represented an incredible feat of engineering, encompassing 113 miles of roadway and 42 bridges connecting the hopscotch collection of islands, including the famous Seven Mile Bridge, which joins the Middle Keys to the Lower Keys.

Today, the highway can be traversed in less than four hours from Miami. However, we recommend that you allow time to take in the local scenery or

stop in at some of the souvenir shops and seafood shacks along the way. And the views from your car window will be nothing short of spectacular. The Keys, you see, are surrounded by three bodies of water – the Atlantic Ocean on one side, and Florida Bay and the Gulf of Mexico on the other. Make sure someone in the car has a camera ready, especially on the bridges when the water is spread out beneath you in all its blue-green glory, speckled by sunlight and extending to the horizon on all sides.

Highway History

- The Overseas Highway was completed in 1938, opening the Keys to the rest of the country.
- In 1982, 37 of the bridges along the Overseas Highway, including the well-known Seven Mile Bridge linking Marathon to the Lower Keys, were replaced with wider spans.

Something else you'll find along the Overseas Highway are the guideposts that serve as local addresses – the **Mile Markers**. As their name implies, Mile Markers are posted at each mile and appear as small green signs on the right shoulder or median strip of the highway. Beginning with MM 126, just south of Florida City, and ending with MM 0 in Key West, at the corner of Whitehead and Fleming, Mile Markers are referred to constantly in the Keys as a means of giving directions.

Asking a local resident where a certain restaurant is, for example, might get you the answer, "Mile Marker 88, bayside." Then you'd know to look on the

Florida Bay side of the Overseas Highway, which would be on your right if you're heading south. If something's not bayside, then it's oceanside. These designations will appear throughout this guide as (B) or (O), following the Mile Marker number. By the time you get down to Marathon, Florida Bay has become the Gulf of Mexico; however, for the sake of continuity, all addresses given here will either be bay or oceanside.

WARNING

Take care along the Overseas Highway when looking for a hotel, restaurant, store or attraction by its Mile Marker designation. The locals know the road well and zip along at a brisk pace, so it's simply not safe to slow down, especially since the highway is, for the most part, only one lane in each direction. If you drive past your destination, keep going, and turn around at the next available opportunity.

Getting Around

Upper, Middle & Lower Keys

It's easy to get around the Upper, Middle and Lower Keys by car, taxi, or a tour service like **To 'N Fro Tours** (see *Touring the Keys*, page 374). After all, the individual Keys are so narrow, there's very little opportunity to get lost on side streets.

Rental Cars

Key Largo

In Key Largo, local rental car agencies include **Enterprise**, ☎ 305-451-3998; **Thrifty Car Rental**, ☎ 305-852-6088; and **Key Largo Auto Rental,** ☎ 305-451-0828.

Islamorada

In Islamorada, you can rent a car with **Enterprise**, ☎ 305-664-2344.

Marathon

On-site rental car companies at Marathon International Airport include **Avis** (☎ 305-743-5428); **Budget** (☎ 305-743-3998); and **Enterprise** (☎ 305-289-7630), all open daily. Taxi and shuttle services from the airports are available as well; see *Getting Here – by Road*, pages 281-282, and *Getting Around – Taxi Service*, pages 286-287.

Taxi Service

Key Largo

You can't hail a taxi, but you can call **Key Largo Taxi**, ☎ 305-451-9700 or **Mom's Taxi**, ☎ 305-453-4049 for pick-up. Car service is provided by **Upper Keys Transportation**, ☎ 305-852-9533 or **Paradise to Reality and Back**, ☎ 305-852-4656, featuring a fleet of limousines.

Islamorada

In Islamorada, call **Village Taxi** for a pick-up, ☎ 305-664-8181.

Marathon

For a taxi in Marathon, call **Action Taxi**, ☎ 305-743-6800 or **Cheapo Taxi**, ☎ 305-743-7420.

Lower Keys

In the Lower Keys, taxi service is provided by **Big Pine Taxi Service**, ☎ 305-872-0577 and **Courtesy Transportation**, ☎ 305-872-9314.

Bicycle & In-line Skate Rental

Upper Keys

Many full-service hotels in the Keys offer bicycle rentals.

Bicycle and in-line skate rentals are available at **Equipment Locker Sport and Bicycle** in Key Largo, MM 101 (O); ☎ 305-453-0140. Bikes are also rented at **Tavernier Bicycle and Hobbies**, MM 92 (B); ☎ 305-852-2859.

Lower Keys

In the Lower Keys, rent a bicycle at **Big Pine Bicycle Center** on Big Pine Key, ☎ 305-872-0130.

Key West

Since Key West is roughly just four miles by two in size, your own two feet may suffice for transportation. However, when you're ready to "take a load off," a variety of vehicles are at your service.

Rental Cars

If you need to rent a car in Key West, the following agencies are located at Key West International Airport: **Avis**, ☎ 305-296-8744; **Budget**, ☎ 305-294-8868; **Dollar**, ☎ 305-296-9921; and **Hertz**, ☎ 305-294-1039. Nearby is **Alamo**, ☎ 305-294-6675. Located on Duval Street, **Tropical Rent-A-Car** also rents scooters and bicycles, ☎ 305-294-8136.

Taxi & Bus Service

Taxi companies in Key West include **Florida Keys Taxi**, ☎ 305-296-6666 or **Friendly Cab**, ☎ 305-292-0000. There are bus routes covering all of the two- by four-mile island, including Old Town; the fare is 75¢. You can also take the bus from Stock Island to the airport (green route), or from the airport to Stock Island (blue route).

Bicycle & In-line Skate Rental

Key West streets can be congested when lots of tourists are in town, so park your car and go by foot, bike or skates.

Mopeds and bicycles are available at **Moped Hospital**, 601 Truman Avenue, ☎ 305-296-3344. Rent a scooter from **Atlantic Side Scooters**, 3340 N. Roosevelt Boulevard, ☎ 305-296-0059. A large selection of bicycles can be rented at the **Bike Shop**, 1110 Truman Avenue, ☎ 305-294-1073. **Island Watersports** at the Hilton Key West Marina, 245 Front Street, also rents bicycles, ☎ 305-296-1754.

A fun way to zip around the streets of Key West is by electric car, available from **Key West Cruisers**. The two- and four-passenger vehicles are open-air and sporty. 1111 Eaton Street; ☎ 305-294-4724 or 888-800-8802. Reservations are suggested.

Tour Trains & Shuttles

Transportation and entertainment combine on 90-minute narrated tours with **Old Town Trolley**, ☎ 305-296-6688, and the **Conch Tour Train**, ☎ 305-294-5161. Both depart from Mallory Square throughout the day (see Key West *Attractions*, page 362, for fares and additional information).

The **Bone Island Shuttle**, ☎ 305-293-8710, offers a convenient transportation option for visitors whose accommodations are located near the airport or away from the Old Town/downtown hub. A daily ticket allows them to travel between their hotels and Old Town as many times as they wish, between 9 am and 10 pm. Stops include the Key West Welcome Center, Mallory Square and a number of hotels, including the Fairfield Inn and the Ramada Inn.

If you're just coming into Key West for the day, driving and parking on the island's narrow streets can be tricky. Try the **Park 'N Ride Service** on the corner of Grinnell and Caroline streets. For a nominal charge, you can leave your car and shuttle to the downtown area, including Old Town, the Southernmost Point, Mallory Square and all points in between. The shuttle departs the parking facility every half hour; ☎ 305-293-6426.

Climate

Though they are the southernmost region in the continental United States, the Keys' climate is not the nation's hottest by any means. In summer, temperatures are held in check by ocean breezes coming off the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico, while subtropical winters are mild. But if you do visit during the winter, don't be surprised to see the locals bundled up. To most South Floridians, a cold snap is underway when the mercury dips below 70° F.

Daytime temperatures in the Keys average about 82° year-round, with nighttime lows averaging 73°. The likelihood of rain increases in the summer, with afternoon showers the usual pattern. In winter, days are breezy and the skies a brilliant blue and, when the wind picks up, the water alternates between blue-green and dark mustard as small whitecaps blow toward shore.

Planning Your Trip

Information Sources

For information on the Keys, call or write the **Florida Keys & Key West Visitors Bureau**, ☎ 305-296-1552 or 800-FLA-KEYS (toll-free from the US and Canada), PO Box 1147, Key West, FL 33041. You can visit the Keys on-line at www.fla-keys.com.

For more detailed information on the individual Keys, call or stop by these chambers of commerce.

Key Largo, MM 106 (B). . . . . ☎ 800-822-1088
Islamorada, MM 82.1 (B) . . . . . ☎ 800-FAB-KEYS
Marathon, MM 53.5 (B) . . . . ☎ 800-2-MARATHON
Lower Keys, MM 31 (O). . . . . ☎ 800-USA-ESCAPE
Key West, 402 Wall Street . . . . . ☎ 800-LAST-KEY

Packing Tips

Casual is the word for your wardrobe. Even the island's most elegant restaurants maintain a code of "Keys casual," which is more resort wear than formal wear. But feel free to dress for the evening if you like. For day, you'll need shorts and light, short-sleeved shirts or T-shirts. Tennis or deck shoes are best for sightseeing excursions. They also offer more protection for feet than sandals or open shoes on boat trips or in wildlife areas.

TIP

Whether you'll be boating, sunbathing, diving or fishing, you'll need to protect your skin from the plentiful Florida sunshine, so don't forget the sunscreen, after-sun lotion, hat and sunglasses.

While the weather year-round is generally mild in the Keys, it can get nippy in the winter, especially from December to February. You may need – gasp! – long sleeves, pants and a jacket. But coats, mittens, warm hats and scarves? Never!

Tourist Safety Tips

The Keys don't suffer from the same big-city ills as Greater Miami and are, by and large, an extremely safe destination. But you should still be on your guard regarding valuables and cash. If there is a safe in your hotel room, use it. Don't wear your finest jewels or best watch, or carry large sums of cash in your pockets or purse, especially in Key West, where you'll be rubbing shoulders with lots of other tourists.

Sunup to Sundown

Beaches

With water, water everywhere, you'd think beaches in the Florida Keys would be everywhere, too. Of

course, there are plenty of places to stretch out on the sand, but the shore isn't lined with beaches as on the Florida mainland. Nor do Keys beaches reach the proportions of beaches in, say, Miami, Sanibel or Daytona. Nature has seen to that. The coral reefs fringing the Florida Keys help break up the wave action that, literally, creates sand. So beaches in the Keys tend to be smaller. Still, they're quite lovely, studded with palms and fronting tranquil blue-green waters.

Upper Keys

Pennekamp beaches include Cannon Beach, which has an authentic reconstruction of an early Spanish shipwreck lying 130 feet offshore.

JOHN PENNEKAMP CORAL REEF STATE PARK
MM 102.5 (O)
Key Largo
☎ 305-451-1621
Admission: $4 per car and 50¢ per person

The park boasts a full range of activities on land and at sea, including diving, snorkeling, camping, and nature hikes. Pennekamp also offers three small beaches. Restrooms and showers are on-site.

HARRY HARRIS COUNTY PARK
MM 92.5 (O)
Key Largo
Entrance fee on weekends

This waterfront park offers a beach, playground, sports field and picnic grounds. Restrooms.

WARNING

The Monroe County Health Department is maintaining a precautionary health advisory based on test results that showed elevated fecal coliform bacteria counts in nearshore waters at several beach locations in the Keys. At press time, the only beaches affected were Rest Beach in Key West and Sea Oats Beach in Islamorada. The culprit? Antiquated sewer systems that are currently being replaced by a new sewage collection system and a state-of-the-art waste-water treatment facility.

Testing is ongoing; the specific beaches included in the advisory may change, and the problem might be cleared up entirely before your visit, so check before you scratch beach-going from your list of things to do. To check the status of the advisory, call the Monroe County Health Department's 24-hour recorded information hot line at ☎ 877-892-9585. For questions not answered by the recording, contact health department officials on weekdays at ☎ 305-293-7544.

ANNE'S BEACH
MM 73.5 (O)
Islamorada
No fee

Long stretches of sand are linked by a nature trail at this shallow-water beach. Restroom facilities are available.

LONG KEY STATE PARK
MM 67.5 (O)
Islamorada
☎ 305-664-4815
Admission: $3.25 per vehicle and 50¢ per person

With a beach area ideal for children due to its shallow waters, Long Key also offers hiking, canoeing and picnicking. Restrooms.

Middle Keys

SOMBRERO BEACH
MM 50 (O)
Marathon

Deep-water beach, picnic facilities, children's playground and restrooms.

CURRY HAMMOCKS PARK
MM 56 (O)
Marathon

Besides the beach, visitors enjoy bicycling, hiking and picnicking. Restrooms.

VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK
MM 39 (O)
Little Duck Key

Located on the south side of the Seven Mile Bridge, this beach offers picnic shelters, restrooms and outdoor showers.

Lower Keys

BAHIA HONDA STATE PARK
MM 37 (O)
Big Pine Key
☎ 305-872-2353
Admission: $4 per car and 50¢ per person

Regarded by some as the best in the Keys, Bahia Honda's powdery soft sand beaches are bordered by turquoise waters, with tall palms swaying overhead. Beachgoers can also indulge in a host of activities, including camping, snorkeling, bicycling, and kayaking. Restrooms and showers are on-site.

Key West

SMATHERS BEACH
Just west of the airport on S. Roosevelt Blvd.
Key West
No fee

One of Key West's longest beaches, Smathers offers beach volleyball, watersports equipment rentals and picnic areas. Restrooms are on-site.

FORT ZACHARY TAYLOR STATE HISTORIC SITE
Southard Street entrance to the Truman Annex
Key West
☎ 305-292-6713
Admission: $4 per car and 50¢ per person; pedestrians and bicyclists, $1.50 each

Fort Zachary offers shaded picnic areas, a fishing area, and a 1,000-foot beach fronting the Atlantic, with excellent offshore snorkeling. Restrooms are on-site.

Fort Zachary is considered by many to be the best beach in Key West.

CLARENCE HIGGS MEMORIAL BEACH
Atlantic Blvd. between White and Reynolds streets
Key West
No fee

A half-mile from Smathers, this small beach features picnic areas, watersports and concession stands. Across the street are a playground and free tennis courts, and a fishing pier is adjacent; restrooms are on-site.

Diving

The waters surrounding the Florida Keys are home to the world's largest barrier coral reef system, thousands of acres of seagrasses and hundreds of miles of mangrove-fringed shoreline. When it comes to breathtaking scenery, some might argue that the view below the waves in the Florida Keys is more exciting than that above. These would be the divers and snorkelers who flock to the Keys every year – 800,000 strong – to slip into clear, warm waters and take in an underwater panorama of vivid coral reefs, exotic tropical fish of every size and hue, and awe-inspiring shipwrecks.

Even if you're a complete novice when you arrive, you can leave the Keys a certified scuba diver, thanks to the many operators offering expert instruction, equipment rental and dive excursions. An introductory lesson generally takes a day, while open-water certification courses span about four days.

Those who don't want to venture too deep can still view the underwater wonders of the Keys by snorkeling, which requires nothing more than some swimming skills, a mask, snorkel and fins. Equipment

can be easily rented or purchased at numerous locations throughout the Keys and instruction takes about 15 minutes.

Another option is "snuba," or hookah, diving, which allows the tethered diver to reach a depth of 20 feet while breathing air piped down from tanks located on the boat.

An important note – the Health Department's nearshore swimming advisory *does not affect* the reefs, offshore waters or offshore water activities like diving, snorkeling and fishing.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

Coral reefs are living, breathing animals, and their natural pigments produce a range of colors, including white, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. A coral polyp is a tubular sac-like animal with a central mouth surrounded by a ring of tentacles. Reefs form when the corals secrete calcium carbonate exo-skeletons, a growth process measuring 0.3 inches to one inch a year. A careless diver who breaks off a piece of coral may be destroying decades worth of growth.

Dive Sites

Key Largo

The following Key Largo sites are all located within the boundaries of **John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park** and the **Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary**.

Statue of Christ of the Abyss
Its arms outstretched in a gesture beckoning divers and snorkelers to take a closer look, this striking bronze statue stands nine feet tall amid a coral reef in 25 feet of water.

Molasses Reef
A popular reef teeming with tropical marine life and highlighted by high-profile coral heads.

***Benwood* Wreck**
A casualty of World War II, this shipwreck is now home to huge schools of grunt and porkfish.

The Elbow
Several historic shipwrecks rest on this reef, including the *City of Washington*, a steel freighter that went down in 1891. Divers may also come face-to-gills with moray eels and barracuda.

Bibb* and *Duane
Sunk intentionally as dive sites in 1987, these twin 327-foot US Coast Guard cutters are now almost completely covered by colorful coral and gorgonia.

Spiegel Grove
Due to be sunk in spring 2001, this 510-foot military vessel will be the newest addition to Key Largo's impressive shipwreck portfolio.

Islamorada

The waters off Islamorada are home to a variety of shallow coral reefs, mini-walls, shipwrecks, and even an underwater habitat for scientific research, the *Aquarius*.

The *Eagle*
Intentionally sunk to create an underwater habitat, this 287-foot ship rests in 110 feet of water. Coated by sponge and coral, it is also home to schools of grunt, tarpon and jack.

Davis Reef
Frequent interaction with divers has made the green moray eels of Davis Reef downright friendly. Grunts and schoolmaster are other highlights of this location.

Alligator Reef
Don't let the name scare you off; the reef was named for the USS *Alligator*, which grounded and sank in 1822 while protecting a convoy from pirates. All that remains of the original debris are twin piles of ballast stones, but the reef itself is spectacular and just 25 feet below the waves. The spot is marked by a 136-foot lighthouse.

Conch Wall
The sheer slope of Conch Wall makes a dramatic underwater vista, with barrel sponges and gorgonia providing colorful accents.

Crocker Wall
Set in 50 feet of water, this wall measure more than 450 feet with a 30-foot decline, and draws grunts, yellowtail and grouper to its spur-and-groove and black coral formations.

Pickles Reef
This shallow reef (15-25 feet) features scattered wreck remains, tiny creatures like flamingo tongue cowries and stands of pillar coral.

***San Pedro* Underwater Archaeological Preserve**
Part of a flotilla that sank during a 1733 hurricane, the *San Pedro* rests in a white-sand pocket surrounded by turtle grass and prolific marine life.

Marathon

Marathon's reefs offer a tremendous variety of coral formations and fish life, with natural and wreck reefs that are home to Caribbean tropical fish and invertebrates.

Adelaide Baker
A historic shipwreck featuring a pair of huge steamship stacks in just 25 feet of water.

Sombrero Reef
Marked by a 140-foot lighted tower, this reef's coral canyons provide refuge for grunt, snapper and barracuda, while ledges are covered in sea fans. One highlight is an eight-foot coral arch.

Coffin's Patch
Named for its six distinct patch reefs, each with a predominant coral species, Coffin's Patch includes pillar corals and huge brain corals. For snorkelers,

there are shallow elkhorn forests in less than 20 feet of water.

Delta Shoals
A network of coral canyons spread seaward from a sandy shoal, with elkhorn, brain and star coral heads on display for divers and snorkelers.

The *Thunderbolt*
Sunk as a dive attraction in 1986, this 188-foot ship sits upright in 115 feet of water, her body overlaid with sponges, corals and hydroids that attract large angelfish, jacks and a variety of deep-water creatures.

Lower Keys

A marine sanctuary teeming with life and a magnificent wreck are highlights of diving in the Lower Keys.

Looe Key National Marine Sanctuary
Named for the HMS *Looe*, which ran aground on the reef in 1744, the reef at Looe Key is a gem among coral in the Keys, and benefits from special protection as a National Marine Sanctuary. Spearfishing, coral collection and lobstering are all banned, resulting not only in a gorgeous, unspoiled reef but a profusion of fish, many willing to swim right up to a diver's mask.

Adolphus Busch Sr.
Intentionally sunk in 1998, this former island freighter sits upright in 100 feet of water, seven miles Southwest of Big Pine Key.

Key West

Key West may be famous for its colorful history and land-based attractions, but another world, just as fascinating, waits beneath the waves.

Sand Key
This tiny island about six miles off Key West is surrounded by abundant coral and marine life, including more than 10 miles of coral reefs living in various depths.

Joe's Tug
Sitting upright in 65 feet of water, this classic tugboat is filled with jewfish, spotted morays, barracuda and horse-eye jacks.

Ten-Fathom Ledge
A deeper spur-and-groove reef (40 to 50 feet) features unusual coral caves and sharp ledges that both attract fish and delight divers.

The *Cayman Salvor*
This 180-foot, steel-hulled buoy tender was intentionally sunk in 1985 and now sits upright in about 90 feet of water. A good current brings visibility and the big fish.

Nine Foot Stake
Standing in 10 to 25 feet of water, this patch reef is perfect for snorkel exploration as well as diving, and is known for soft corals and juvenile marine life.

Kedge Ledge
A highlight of this lovely reef is the remnants of a pair of now coral-encrusted anchors lost from 18th-century sailing vessels.

The *Windjammer*
The *Windjammer* wreck is located on Loggerhead Reef, south of Loggerhead Key, in the Dry Tortugas. The old iron steamer, reportedly Dutch, ran aground in the 1920s and now boasts a dense fish population.

The *Atocha*
The *Atocha* is not exactly a local dive site – it's about 30 miles out – but what a find. Part of a fleet carrying riches back to Spain from the New World, the *Atocha* sank in a hurricane in 1622 and was discovered three and a half centuries later by treasure hunter Mel Fisher. Only one dive operator goes to the *Atocha*, and that is Key West-based **Captain's Corner** (☎ 305-296-8918).

Instruction & Excursions

It seems as if there's a dive shop on every corner along the Overseas Highway. Many are full-service, meaning they offer instruction, rental equipment and guided charters. We have included just a sampling of the numerous choices.

KEY WEST DIVE RATES

Half-day (morning and afternoon) dive and snorkel excursions are the norm in the Florida Keys, though full-day private dive charters are available for about $400-$450.

Expect to pay from $48-$60 for a half-day, two-tank dive, including the basic tanks and weights. (Generally, a two-tank dive indicates you will be visiting two different dive sites.) Some operators offer longer, three-tank dives for about $15-$20 more.

You may be able to walk right up and get on a dive boat, but advance reservations are recommended, particularly if you want to take a dive course.

If you don't plan to travel with full dive gear, or to purchase equipment during your stay in the Keys, complete gear rental packages can cost between $25 and $40 and include tanks, weights, a regulator, BC (Buoyancy Compensator) and, sometimes, a full wet suit.

Want to leave the Keys as a certified diver? Complete three- or four-day certification courses run about $400-$450 and generally include pool instruction and at least two open-water dives. For a quick taste of diving, one-day resort courses (without certification) for beginners cost about $110-$150 and allow you to dive with instructor supervision.

If you're already a diver, all kinds of specialty instruction courses are available, including drift diving, wreck diving and rescue diving, with rates anywhere from $150-$500.

Those who prefer to remain closer to the surface can opt for snorkeling, which costs about $30 per half-day trip, including snorkel and fins. Snuba (or hookah) excursions run about $70-$75.

Key Largo

Keys Diver Snorkel Tours

Two snorkel tours daily include one-stop morning and three-stop afternoon excursions. One-stop sunset tours are seasonal. Prices include mask, fins, snorkel, safety vest and instruction. The boat features two sundecks, a freshwater shower, restroom,

and plenty of cold drinks. ☎ 305-451-1177 or 888-289-2402; www.keysdiver.com.

Ocean Divers
Instruction levels range from a one-day introduction all the way to instructor status. Two-tank dive trips depart twice daily for about a four-hour trip, while one-tank night dives are offered Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Snorkel trips are offered as well. Gear rentals, ice and air fills are available dockside. ☎ 305-451-1113.

Sharky's Dive Center
Two-tank dive trips depart twice daily while snorkel-only trips are offered three times a day. Night dives are available upon request. Complete gear rental is extra. ☎ 305-451-5533 or 800-935-DIVE.

Silent World Dive Center
Two daily dive and snorkel trips depart aboard custom 12- and 14-passenger dive boats. Sites vary from reef, wreck and deep dives, depending on the group. Private charters and special site requests are accommodated. Guided reef and wreck tours, night dives and Snuba tours are also available. NAUI and PADI instruction ranges from beginner to master levels. Equipment is not included in the trip price. Multi-day dive packages include the dive charter, tanks and weights. ☎ 305-451-3252 or 800-966-DIVE.

Snuba Tours of Key Largo
This operator runs half-day Snuba and snorkel trips out to the coral reefs of John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park. The shallow-water dive excursion includes Snuba gear, a quick orientation, and a guided reef tour. ☎ 305-451-6391.

Tavernier Dive Center

Tavernier Dive Center also help you with area accommodations. If you take advantage of that service, your dive rate is reduced.

Morning, afternoon and night dives are taken aboard the 40-foot dive boat *Shadow*, which can accommodate 24 divers. The center also offers complete instruction for the new diver as well as continuing education for the experienced diver. Single- and multi-day rates are available, along with equipment rental and sales. ☎ 305-852-4007 or 800-787-9797; www.tavernierdivecenter.com.

Sundiver Station

Strictly for snorkelers, three trips depart daily aboard the *Sundiver*, and additional late afternoon dives are offered during the summer. An experienced crew and small groups mean lots of personal attention. Equipment rental is available at a nominal fee. ☎ 305-451-2220 or 800-654-7369.

Wreck Diver Ventures

Taking the marital plunge? Wreck Diver Ventures can arrange your underwater nuptials at the Christ of the Abyss statue.

Sites range from deep wrecks to shallow reefs on twice-daily trips of up to 12 divers. Night dives are offered as well, while snorkel packages are available for groups of two-20. Also available are PADI and YMCA dive courses, specialty certifications, check-out dives, guided dives, resort dives and equipment rental. ☎ 305-451-3900.

Islamorada

Holiday Isle Dive Center

A 22-passenger custom dive boat takes two trips daily, both for two-tank dives and snorkeling. Private charters and night dives are also available. Rental equipment is extra. Private or group NAUI or PADI instruction is given, including beginning, advanced and specialty courses. ☎ 305-664-DIVE or 800-327-7070.

Lady Cyana Divers
Morning and afternoon dives are offered, along with complete PADI instruction, from resort courses to advanced and specialty courses. A rental equipment package is in addition to the dive price. Accommodations packages include hotel and dive trips, and save you money on both ends. ☎ 305-664-8717 or 800-221-8717.

Lady Cyana also rents underwater cameras.

Rainbow Reef Dive Center
Located at Tropical Reef Resort, this full-service PADI member offers dive and snorkel trips, full gear rental and sales, and complete PADI instruction. Wreck, reef, drift and night dives are taken from the center's small, custom dive boats. Personal touches include complimentary fresh fruit, cookies and sodas on board. Sunset dinner cruises around Windley Key and Lignumvitae eco-tours are also available. ☎ 305-664-4600 or 800-457-4354.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

A **PADI** dive operation is certified by the Los Angeles-based Professional Association of Diving Instructors, the world's largest training agency. **NAUI** operations follow the guidelines set by the National Association of Underwater Instructors, while **SSI** facilities use the teaching systems of Scuba Schools International. All offer a full range of training programs.

Marathon

Captain Hook's Marina And Dive Center
A complete PADI facility, with instruction and certification courses, two dive and snorkel trips daily, equipment sales and rentals. Two boats with freshwater showers take out small groups – almost like having a private charter. Captain Hook's also offers boat rentals and fishing charters. ☎ 305-743-2444 or 800-278-4665.

Glass Bottom Boat
Located at Rainbow Bend Resort, this is a great option for the diving or snorkeling novice. A shaded, glass-bottom boat with large viewing windows ferries the group out to the reefs, where they have a choice of snorkeling or scuba diving. If you're not certified for diving, and don't necessarily want to be, try the hookah diving (snuba), which allows you to float on the surface or go all the way to the sandy bottom. ☎ 305-289-9933; www.seethereef.com.

The Glass Bottom dive boat is a good choice for the diving or snorkeling novice.

Hall's Diving Center
Located at Faro Blanco Marine Resort, the center's *Lady Key Diver* boat takes two dive and snorkel trips daily, with a choice of wreck and reef locations. Specialty dives include marine interaction dives, wet submarine dives with underwater communication systems, and diver propulsion vehicles. Rental equipment and a full range of dive instruction and certification are also offered. ☎ 305-743-5929 or 800-331-4255.

Marathon Divers
This full-service dive center offers two dive/snorkel trips daily aboard a 30-foot custom dive boat, visiting two locations, with a maximum of 10 divers.

Rental gear is extra. New divers can take the "Scuba in a Day" resort course, which includes lessons, all gear and a two-tank reef dive with an instructor. ☎ 305-289-1141 or 800-724-5798.

Sombrero Reef Explorers
Two snorkel reef trips are run daily aboard a 27-foot dive boat, with no more than six passengers along. Gear and instruction are included in the rate. Sombrero also offers full- and half-day fishing trips and sunset cruises. ☎ 305-743-0536; www.sombrero-reef.com.

Lower Keys

Innerspace Dive Center
This SSI facility offers two diving and snorkeling excursions daily. The fees do not include equipment. Full SSI instruction is offered, but PADI and NAUI instructors are on staff as well. ☎ 305-872-2319 or 800-538-2896.

Seahorse Scuba
Enjoy a relaxed dive experience aboard a 30-foot boat that takes one trip a day with a maximum six passengers. Two-tank and three-tank reef dives include tanks and weights. Complete PADI instruction, including open-water certification. Underwater cameras available for rent. ☎ 305-745-2315.

Strike Zone Charters
Two daily diving and snorkeling trips include two locations at the Looe Key reef, with transportation aboard a glass-bottom boat. Fees do not include equipment. Complete instruction ranges from one-day courses to full certification. ☎ 305-872-9863 or 800-654-9560.

Underseas Dive Shop
Two daily trips take divers and snorkelers to the Looe Key reef. Snorkel fee includes equipment; dive fee includes tanks and weights only. Four full-time instructors teach a complete array of courses. If you're looking for full certification, your course begins with a home-study program. ☎ 305-872-2700 or 800-446-5663.

Key West

Captain's Corner
Two boats take trips twice a day, one to the shallow reefs, the other to wreck sites and the outer reefs. Once a month, there is an excursion to the *Atocha*, a 17th-century shipwreck located about 30 miles from Key West. ☎ 305-296-8918.

Dive Key West
Inner reefs, outer reefs and wrecks are explored on twice-daily dive and snorkel excursions. Night dives are also available. The center is authorized to teach NAUI, SSI, PADI and YMCA certification programs. ☎ 305-296-3823 or 800-426-0707; www.divekeywest.com.

Sebago Catamarans
Enjoy snorkeling adventures aboard a 60-foot catamaran. Morning, afternoon and all-day excursions are available, along with evening snorkel tours. Trips include gear, soft drinks, freshwater shower rinse, and beer and wine aprés snorkeling. ☎ 305-294-5687.

Southpoint Divers
This PADI five-star facility runs two-tank dive trips twice daily; the morning trip features wreck and

reef, the afternoon is all reef. The base price of $59 does not include BC or regulator. PADI scuba and specialty certifications are available at an approximate cost of $400 for a three-day course. The center can also make hotel arrangements. ☎ 305-292-9778 or 800-891-DIVE; www.southpointdivers.com.

Southpoint Divers also offers diver propulsion vehicles, private charters, back-country trips, fishing and more.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

A "BC," or buoyancy compensator, is a type of vest that allows the diver to maintain neutral buoyancy and proper balance while under water. Adding air or letting air out of a BC also permits the diver to ascend or descend.

Subtropic Dive Center
Offering morning wreck dives and afternoon reef dives, Subtropic also features night dives, lobster dives and instructor-escorted, introductory dive trips. Equipment is extra. Private classes for open-water certification, rescue diver and other specialties are available. Snorkel trips are offered twice daily, featuring two spectacular reef locations, with equipment included. ☎ 305-296-9914 or 800-853-DIVE; www.subtropic.com.

Conservation

In order to preserve their status as a premier dive destination, the Keys' offshore environments benefit from strenuous conservation measures. In fact, the entire island chain, from northernmost Key Largo south to the Dry Tortugas, is protected as the **Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary**, the

nation's only tropical marine preserve. As such, certain protective regulations apply. For example, divers may not remove or injure coral or live rock, and diving or snorkeling without a dive flag is prohibited. Most dive operators brief clients on basic underwater conservation measures. Call the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary for more information at ☎ 305-743-2437.

REEF CONSERVATION TIPS

- Check weather conditions before booking a reef trip. Strong winds and waves, and the limited visibility that follows, reduce safe interaction at the reef.
- Don't touch. Even the lightest touch can damage sensitive coral polyps.
- Wearing float coats allows snorkelers to adjust gear without standing on the coral.
- To help promote new growth, even in seemingly lifeless areas, avoid contact with the ocean bottom. Proper weight adjustment and buoyancy control should make it possible.
- Collecting marine life species – tropical fish, invertebrates and plants – is prohibited except as allowed by Florida Marine Life rules. Taking protected species such as queen conch is strictly forbidden. If you must capture an underwater creature, please do it on film.

- Please don't feed the fish. Doing so destroys their natural feeding habits.
- Harvesting coral is illegal in Florida.

Boating

It's impossible to ignore the fact that you're completely surrounded by water in the Florida Keys. And there are so many ways to get out there and enjoy it, whether you're diving, fishing or just cruising. Besides the many hotels offering boat rentals, nearly every Keys marina offers boat and other pleasure craft rentals. If you want to let someone else do the driving, try a boat or sailboat excursion. No matter what you choose, the Keys are a wet and wonderful vacation destination.

Here are just some of the options available for your adventure "on the waterfront."

TIP

Most boat rentals and tours require advance reservations, especially during high season.

Boat Rentals

Expect to pay between $85 and $150 per half-day (four hours) to rent a 19-foot boat for fishing, diving or snorkeling, and about $130 to $175 for a 20- to 22-foot boat. If you're going deep-sea fishing, you'll probably want a full day's rental, which would run about $150-$200 for a 19-foot boat and between

$225-$325 for boats up to 22 feet. Some outfitters also rent by the hour, usually with a two-hour minimum. Smaller boats are available at lower rates; for example, a 16- or 17-foot skiff could rent as low as $75 for a half day.

Upper, Middle & Lower Keys

Italian Fisherman Marina Boat Rentals
Full- and half-day boat rentals include 19- and 22-foot fishing boats with center consoles, all equipped with canopy tops for shade. MM 104 (B), Key Largo; ☎ 305-451-3726.

Bluefin Rock Harbor Marina
A variety of rental boats includes custom dive and fishing boats in all sizes, along with Yamaha WaveRunners. Located in Pennekamp Park, MM 97 (O), Key Largo; ☎ 305-852-2025 or 800-350-6572; www.milemarker97.com.

Treasure Harbor Marine
Their fleet of power and sailing yachts ranges in size from 19 feet to 41 feet. Go "bareboat" or hire a captain and crew. Dockage is free to charter parties. MM 86.5 (O), Islamorada, ☎ 305-852-2458 or 800-FLA-BOAT; www.treasureharbor.com.

Cobra Marine
Cobra offers half- and full-day rentals of boats ranging from 18-foot Tritons with center consoles to 21-foot pontoon boats. Multi-day rates also available. MM 85.9 (B), Islamorada, ☎ 305-664-3636.

Robbie's Marina
Robbie's is a full-service marina and also features party boat and charter fishing trips, eco-tours, kay-

ak rentals and sunset tours. Their 14- to 27-foot rental boats with convertible canopies accommodate between two and 10 people. Larger boats have built-in radios; hand-held radios are provided for skiff rentals. Instruction and orientation also included. MM 77.5 (B), Islamorada, ☎ 305-664-9814 or 877-664-8498.

Robbie's Marina offers twice-daily boat launches to Indian Key for $15, which includes the tour.

Quality Boat Rentals
Fishing boats up to 20 feet are available, with center consoles, VHF, depth finders and other features. Cell phones included. There's a three-day minimum, with weekly and monthly rates also available. Free delivery and pick-up to your dock from Duck Key to the Seven Mile Bridge. Marathon, ☎ 305-743-2895 or 877-743-2895.

Island Seafari
Rental boats range in size from 17 to 25 feet for ocean and back-country fishing, diving and snorkeling. Rent on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Charters available. MM 53.5 at Vaca Cut Bridge, Marathon, ☎ 305-289-2188 or 888-289-2188.

Looe Key Boat Rentals
Offering a 17-foot skiff along with 19- and 22-foot, center console fishing boats. Bimini tops, radio, compass, rod holders and dive flag are included. MM 25 (O), Summerland Key, ☎ 305-744-3366.

All Aboard Boat Rental
Available for daily or multi-day rentals are 19- to 24-foot skiffs with center console for diving and fishing. MM 24.5 (O), Summerland Key, ☎ 305-745-8877.

Key West Boat Rentals

Aaron's U.S. 1 Marina Boat Rentals
Aaron's offers a range of Boston whalers and pontoon boats for fishing and diving excursions. MM 4.5 (O), Stock Island, ☎ 305-296-0075.

Garrison Bight Marina
This marina has 19- or 20-foot boats with center consoles available for full- or half-day fishing or diving excursions. They also rent party boats that seat up to eight people. The marina is on the Garrison Bight Causeway, ☎ 305-294-3093.

Key West Boat Rental
For fishing and diving, they offer 20-foot boats with center consoles for full- or half-day rental. Or, just for tooling around, try a 20-foot jet boat. Jet Ski rentals are also available. 617 Front St., Old Town, ☎ 305-294-2628.

WARNING

Boaters should be very careful when navigating around the coral reefs. Dropped boat anchors can gouge the reef and crush corals. Take care to avoid the reefs and drop anchor only on nearby sandy areas.

Boat Tours & Excursions

The variety of boat tours and the range of prices is extensive. For more specific information, contact the individual operators.

In general, you'll pay between $17 and $25 per person for various glass-bottom boat tours throughout the Keys and Key West; between $45 and $90 for a four-hour guided kayak tour; and about $59 for a 2½-hour guided speed boat tour. A day sail aboard one of the tall ships out of Key West will run from $25 to $30 while sunset sails range $30-$45. Private charters can range anywhere from $400 to $800 a day and to several thousand dollars for multi-day excursions. Catamaran excursions to Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas run from $85 to $95.

Upper, Middle & Lower Keys

Key Largo Princess

This 70-foot glass-bottom boat tours the undersea world of John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park at 10 am, 1 pm and 4 pm daily. Be there 20 minutes before departure. Call first, as tour times are subject to change. MM 100, Key Largo, ☎ 305-451-4655.

Easy Adventure Boat Tours

Explore the Keys from a 20-foot center-console boat with canopy. A guide will assist you in identifying and photographing native species and take you to remote bays and narrow creeks to view tropical wildlife. Basic instruction for snorkeling and fishing is available. Located at World Wide Sportsman, MM 81.5 (B), Islamorada, ☎ 305-852-4553.

Reflections Nature Tours

Guided kayak tours through the Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge offer a glimpse of birds, animals and marine life. Visitors paddle through calm, shallow water in easy-to-handle sea kayaks. The half-day tour includes gear, instruction, drinks and

snacks. Kayak rentals also available. MM 30 (B), Big Pine Key, ☎ 305-872-2896 or 305-923-6786.

Key West

Discovery Tours
Three daily reef trips aboard the *Discovery* glass-bottom boat, featuring an underwater viewing room. Land's End Marina, 251 Margaret Street, ☎ 305-293-0099.

Jungle Tours
You drive your own small speedboat but follow a tour guide into the mangrove backcountry, stopping for snorkeling, swimming and sunbathing in shallow waters. The tour includes gear, water goggles and refreshments. Boats seat three – perfect for two adults and a child. Four tours daily. US-1 Marina, ☎ 305-292-3300.

Liberty Fleet of Tall Ships
The 80-foot schooner *Liberty* offers two sails daily with cash bar. The 125-foot *Liberty Clipper* offers sunset sails with beer, wine and champagne. From November to May, the fleet also offers dinner and Caribbean barbecue sails. Hilton Resort & Marina, 245 Front Street, ☎ 305-292-0332.

Mosquito Coast
Guided kayak tours take visitors through the mangrove islands of the Keys' backcountry. Stop to snorkel if you like. Daily trips include bottled water and snacks; bring your own lunch. 1107 Duval Street, ☎ 305-294-7178.

Schooner *Western Union*
Launched in 1939 as a working schooner, the 130-foot *Western Union* now offers day, sunset and starlight sails. Day sails – offered daily except Wednesdays – include a retelling of the boat's exciting history, while weekend starlight sails include a bottle of champagne; both are dependent on groups of at least 10. Reservations are recommended. Schooner Wharf, 202 William Street, ☎ 305-292-1766.

Sunset sails aboard the Western Union *include live music and complimentary conch chowder, beer, wine and champagne.*

Schooner *Wolf*
A 19th century replica of the Blockade Runners used by pirates and smugglers, the *Wolf* offers romantic sunset cruises featuring live music and free beer, wine, champagne and soft drinks. Later starlight sails are also available. Historic Key West Seaport, ☎ 305-296-9653.

Sunny Days Catamaran
Take the *Fast Cat* to historic Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas. The all-day adventure includes onboard continental breakfast and a buffet lunch on the island, complimentary beverages throughout the day, a guided tour of the fort and snorkel gear. An optional side snorkeling trip to the *Windjammer* wreck is extra. Historic Seaport at Elizabeth and Greene, ☎ 305-292-6100 or 800-236-7937; www.drytortugas.com.

World-Famous Glassbottom Boats
Two-hour narrated reef cruises aboard the *Fireball* glass-bottom boat and the *Pride of Key West*, a glass-bottom catamaran, offer continuous viewing of dramatic underwater vistas. Three trips daily. Two Duval Street, ☎ 305-296-6293; www.seathereef.com.

Yankee Freedom II
This high-speed catamaran takes daily trips to Fort Jefferson, including breakfast and lunch, a guided tour of the Fort, and snorkel gear and instruction. Departs from the Key West Seaport, ☎ 305-294-7009 or 877-327-8228; www.fastcatferry.com.

TIP

Remember to bring along a hat, sunscreen and sunglasses when boating. Insect repellent may also be helpful when kayaking through the mangroves.

Small Craft Rentals

Many Keys hotels and resorts offer small craft rentals from their beaches.

Visitors just want to have fun – and you'll have plenty of it, skimming the waves on a personal watercraft or windsurfing board, exploring the ocean or mangrove forests by kayak, or flying above it all on a thrilling parasailing ride. When you want to take fun on the water into your own hands, the following suppliers can make it happen.

Jet Ski rental prices range from $65 to $95 per hour, depending on the model chosen, while WaveRunners may run between $60 and $120 per hour. A parasailing flight can range from $45-$60. Kayaks are generally less expensive, renting for about $35-$40 for a half-day, and rafts can be rented for about $25 a day. Jet boats are pricey and will run you about $100 per hour.

Upper, Middle & Lower Keys

Florida Bay Outfitters
Rent a kayak or canoe from a fleet of 130. Go off on your own or join a tour; instruction is provided. Half-day to multi-day rentals available. MM 104.5 (B), Key Largo, ☎ 305-451-3018.

Caribbean Watersports
This company has two locations; the first is at the Westin Beach Resort, MM 97 (B) in Key Largo, featuring personal watercraft, parasailing (reservations suggested), Hobie Cat sailing safaris, diving, snuba and more. ☎ 305-852-4707 or 800-223-6728. A second location is at Cheeca Lodge, MM 82 (O), Islamorada, offering parasailing, enviro-tours, diving, snorkeling and snuba. ☎ 305-664-9598 (beach activities) or 888-SEA-REEF; www.caribbeanwatersports.com.

H2O Adventures
Jet and powerboat rentals include 17-foot Yamaha Exciter jet boats that seat up to five and are available for full or half-days. Also offered are champagne sunset cruises plus complete fishing, camping and diving packages. Located at Snapper's Waterfront Restaurant, MM 94.5, Key Largo, ☎ 305-853-4922.

Holiday Isle Watersports
It's a water fun-o-rama. Rentals include personal watercraft, rafts, kayaks and boats. Or you can sail across the waves with a large selection of windsurfing equipment, Hobie Cats and day-sailers. How about sailing 1,000 feet above the water on a parasailing flight? Guided personal watercraft eco-tours,

enviro-kayak tours and sunset catamaran cruises also offered. MM 84, Islamorada, ☎ 305-664-5390 (beach shack) or 305-664-9425 (boat rentals).

Hav-A-Blast Watersports
Launch your watercraft from a sandy beach. Rentals include personal watercraft, jet boats, paddleboats, kayaks and sailboats. Parasailing also offered. Located at Plantation Yacht Harbor, MM 87 (B), Islamorada, ☎ 305-852-2381, ext. 516.

Biggs Watersports
Explore the flats in a saltwater kayak, ride the surf on a personal watercraft or take in the view aboard your own glass-bottom boat. Biggs also rents boats ranging from back-country skiffs to deep-hull watercraft. Fishing and dive gear and supplies also available. Located at Blackfin Resort and Marina, MM 49.5 (B), Marathon, ☎ 305-743-8090.

H2O Rental Services
Watersports rentals include personal watercraft, kayaks, paddleboats and small skiffs for fishing. MM 28.5 (B), Little Torch Key, ☎ 305-872-5554.

Key West

Island Watersports
Rent a Jet Ski for a half-hour or hour, and ride in a five-square-mile area. Guided Jet Ski tours of Key West are offered five times daily. Bicycles are also available for rent on an hourly, daily or weekly basis. Hilton Key West Marina, 245 Front Street, ☎ 305-296-1754.

Sunset Watersports
Lots of waterfront fun with windsurfing, kayaking, sunfish sailing and parasailing. A full-day watersports party boat takes visitors out to sea by catamaran to enjoy personal watercraft, tubing, kayaking, rafting, water-skiing, snorkeling and more; the trip includes a barbecue lunch. Two locations: Smathers Beach and the Key West Seaport, ☎ 305-296-2554.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

WaveRunners and Jet Skis are basically the same kind of toy, a small, powerful water "scooter." Jet Skis usually accommodate up to two riders; WaveRunners can handle three.

Fishing

There's almost a sense of poetry about fishing in the Florida Keys. This was, after all, the home of Ernest Hemingway, who not only fished these waters himself, but based one of his most enduring tales, *The Old Man and the Sea*, about an epic battle between an aged Cuban fisherman and a giant marlin.

Your fishing experience in the Florida Keys might not be as dramatic, but it's sure to be both exciting and relaxing as you ply the Atlantic looking for the "big one." Of course, the big gamefish of the deep aren't your only choice in the Keys. Redfish, snook, bonefish and trout wait in the tranquil waters of Florida Bay's backcountry, while grouper and yellowtail snapper hang around the reefs.

Are you good enough to compete? Call ☎ 888-FISH-KEYS for information on tournaments.

One thing is sure – experienced deep-sea, flats, and backcountry captains will lead you to the catch of the day. The Keys are among the world's top destinations, if not *the* top destination, for record saltwater catches. According to data from the International Game Fish Association (IGFA), more than 10% of all saltwater line class and fly fishing world records have been set in the Florida Keys. No other destination even comes close.

You'll find great fishing charters throughout the Keys, but especially in Islamorada, known as the "Sport Fishing Capital of the World," where the marinas are plentiful and the offshore and backcountry fishing guides among the best anywhere. Or, if you prefer the thrill of the unknown, go ahead and rent a boat for your own fishing adventure.

Another option is to simply drop your line off one of the many bridges linking the Florida Keys along the Overseas Highway. The Seven Mile Bridge and the Bahia Honda Bridge are popular sites for tarpon fishing.

FISHING IN ALL SEASONS

Some fish, including barracuda, grouper, shark, snapper, and snook, swim the waters of the Florida Keys all year. Others, such as tuna and wahoo, are nearly year-round. Amberjack, cobia, king mackerel, and sailfish prefer the winter waters; bonefish, dolphin, blue and white marlin, and permit make their appearance during the summer. There will be some overlap, so check with your boat captain to find out which fish are biting when.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

There are two kinds of "dolphin" in the sea. One is a fish that you may see on a restaurant menu, or (if you are lucky) at the end of a hook; The other is the well-known mammal, which is strictly off limits for anglers (and chefs).

Fishing Charters

Following is a small sample of the scores of charter fishing boats available in the Florida Keys. Nearly every Keys marina is home to at least one fishing boat. Most require advance reservations, especially during high season, when several months' notice may be required. When you book a charter, be prepared to bring your own lunch and beverages, though some boats do provide food. Also, take along a hat, sunglasses, sunscreen and, if necessary, seasickness medication.

You can expect to pay anywhere from $300-$450 for a half-day, deep-sea charter and from $600-$700 for a full day. You may also split a charter with other parties and pay about $100 for a half-day and $150 for a full day. Long-distance fishing charters – to the Dry Tortugas, for example – run $1,600-$2,000 for a full day. Another option is to join a larger group on a bigger boat, in which case you'll pay $25-$35 for a half-day (the larger group boats usually schedule two or three trips a day).

Flats fishing in the backcountry of Florida Bay tends to be less expensive – about $300 for a half-day and $400 for the full day.

For more charter listings, contact the local visitors bureaus or visit the Florida Keys Web site at www.fla-keys.com.

WARNING

When fishing in the Florida Keys, be mindful of what you leave behind. Don't throw trash overboard or leave discarded fishing lines that might entangle fish or birds. Also, look before you cast your line, so as not to hook a seabird that may be hovering overhead.

Key Largo

Dream Maker

Join Captain Jim Arnold for full- and half-day sportfishing excursions for dolphin, wahoo, sailfish, tuna, grouper and snapper, aboard the air-conditioned, 34-foot *Dream Maker*. The trip includes all tackle, bait, ice, fuel and fish cleaning. Bring your own lunch and drinks. MM 100 (O), ☎ 800-451-2418.

Sailor's Choice

This 65-foot boat takes up to 49 passengers on half-day fishing trips in air-conditioned comfort. Night trips are also offered. The goals are snapper, grouper, porgies, and barracuda. The trip includes free rod rental and bait; you bring your own food and drink. The boat is also available for private charters. MM 100 (O), ☎ 305-451-1802.

Mellow Fellow
Captain Frank Stabile guides anglers through ocean flats and backcountry for bonefish, snook, permit, sea trout, tarpon, redfish, snapper and shark. Full- or half-day and night excursions include tackle and bait. Bring your own food and drink. MM 92, Tavernier, ☎ 305-451-4636.

Islamorada

Gulf Lady
Full-day deep-sea fishing trips aboard a 65-foot, air-conditioned party boat include bait and tackle. The boat features an interior salon with color TV, dinette tables, and full galley complete with freezer, refrigerator, stove, sink and microwave, where you can enjoy the food and drink you bring along. MM 79.8, ☎ 305-664-2628 or 800-742-7945.

Heidi Baby
This 48-foot sportfishing boat takes full- and half-day excursions to deep waters teeming with marlin, sailfish, giant grouper, tuna, dolphin, barracuda, king mackerel and many more. They supply tackle, bait and ice; you bring food and drink. MM 84, ☎ 305-664-5262.

Kemosabe Charters
Captain Tom DeMoss guides you through the backcountry of Florida Bay in search of redfish, snook, speckled trout and tarpon, and into the flats around Islamorada, which are known for record-size bonefish. Bait and tackle are provided; bring your own food and beverages. Lorelei Marina, MM 81.9 (B), ☎ 305-852-9359.

Kemosabe Charters has a one-bedroom rental unit available near the Lorelei Marina departure point.

Killer White

Join Captain Bill White on a 50-foot, air-conditioned sportfishing boat that takes six passengers out to the reef, the Gulf Stream and beyond on four- , six- and eight-hour excursions. The captain and crew are experts on fishing for grouper, snapper, kingfish, tuna, sailfish, marlin and wahoo. Tackle and gear are provided; bring your own food and drinks and store them in the boat's refrigerator. MM 83.5 (O), ☎ 800-817-0454.

Ultimate Fishing Charters

Boasting 13 IGFA World Records over the last 23 years, Ultimate offers full- and half-day charters to the backcountry, looking for snook, redfish, trout and tarpon. They supply fishing rods and reels, licenses, bait, fuel and rain gear. An on-board cooler holds the food and drink you bring. MM 84.5 (O), ☎ 305-852-4969.

Marathon

Starlight

Starlight *is available for private charters.*

This ample boat features a large sundeck, enclosed lounges and beverages on board, and sails half-day morning and afternoon excursions from December 15 to April 20. The latest fish-finding equipment looks for snapper, grouper, and kingfish. Rod and reel are available at a nominal charge. *Starlight* is also available for two- or three-day chartered trips to the Tortugas, moonlight sightseeing, cocktail cruises and weddings. MM 53 (O), ☎ 305-743-8436.

Sundance Sportsfishing Adventures

Offering full- and half-day trips to offshore reefs and wrecks as well as morning and evening tarpon trips. Custom tackle, bait, and ice are included; bring your own food and drink. Fly fishing, kite fishing, and

tournament packages are also available. MM 47.5 (B), ☎ 800-282-1712.

Two Conchs Charters
Captain Jack Carlson leads fishing charters aboard a 25-foot boat, taking a maximum of four adults and two children. Your choice – offshore fishing for the "big" catches; reef fishing for mangrove snapper, yellowtail and groupe;, bay wreck fishing for permit, cobia, shark, and more; and night reef fishing. There is also a four-hour trip for giant tarpon. Trips include bait, tackle, ice and fish cleaning; you bring food and drink. Diving charters are also available. MM 52.5 (O), ☎ 305-743-6253.

Two Conchs offers packages that include fishing and accommodations.

Lower Keys

The Grouch Charters
Full- and half-day deep-sea or reef fishing trips with Captain Mark André aboard a 34-foot tournament sportfisher include bait and tackle; you bring food and drink. Vacation home rentals are also available. MM 24.5 (B), ☎ 305-745-1172.

Outcast
Specializing in backcountry flats fishing, Outcast's small boat can only accommodate one or two people on excursions for bonefish, permit, shark, and cobia. A larger boat that can take four is used during tarpon season, from February to July. Bait and tackle are provided; bring your own food and beverages. The boats sail from various marinas in the Lower Keys and Key West. ☎ 305-872-4680 or 800-833-9857.

Sea Boots Charters
Choices include gamefishing aboard one of Sea Boots' two offshore big game boats, or flats fishing on a 16- to 18-foot water skiff. Tackle, bait, and ice are provided; you bring food and drink. MM 30 (B), ☎ 305-745-1530 or 800-238-1746.

Key West

Afternoon Delight

Sunset cocktail trips are also available aboard Afternoon Delight.

This 53-foot sportfishing boat sails on a variety of trips, including reefs and wrecks, offshore and deep-sea, and night monster fishing trips, so named because the goal is large sharks and swordfish. A maximum of six people are taken on four- , six- , or eight-hour trips (night trips are eight hours). Bait and tackle supplied; you bring the grub and drinks. ☎ 305-296-0600 or 800-807-9875.

Andy Griffiths Charters
Fish the Dry Tortugas and Marquesas Keys on a two-night excursion that accommodates private parties of up to six. Fully equipped boats feature galleys with coffee makers, toasters, microwave ovens, gas stoves, electric frying pans, pots, pans and cooking utensils. Boats also feature dinette tables that seat six, baths and showers and six bunks. You bring the groceries; they'll provide the list. There is a charge for tackle. ☎ 305-296-2639.

Linda D.
A 40-foot custom sportfishing yacht sails on full- or half-day charters to deep waters in search of sailfish, marlin, wahoo, tuna, dolphin and barracuda. Bait, tackle and ice are provided; bring your own lunch and beverages. ☎ 305-296-9798 or 800-299-9798.

Tailhooker Charters
Two custom light tackle boats sail on offshore, reef-and-wreck, and inshore excursions, either half- or full-day. Tackle, bait, coolers and ice are provided; taxidermy services also are available. You can bring your lunch or accompany Captain Mike Curry to a marina-side restaurant. ☎ 305-292-4040.

TIP

If you're fishing by boat on your own in the Florida Keys, you'll need a fishing license. But they're easy to get. Apply over the phone with Florida Sports Licensing, ☎ 888-347-4356. VISA, Discover and MasterCard are accepted. The Kmart at MM 101 (O) also issues fishing licenses. If you take a guided charter, the charter's license covers everyone on board. And if you're fishing from a pier or bridge, no license is needed.

Golf & Tennis

If you're staying in Key Largo, you won't be far from the golf courses in Homestead and other cities on the mainland. Or you can drive down to **Key Colony Beach** near MM 53.2 in Marathon, where a nine-hole public golf course is open daily; ☎ 305-289-1533. No tee times are needed.

At the **Key West Golf Club**, on Stock Island at MM 4.5, a challenging 18-hole golf course designed by Rees Jones is set against a backdrop of mangroves

Some hotels offer tennis facilities, though they're usually for guests only. Cheeca Lodge in Islamorada, for example, offers six lighted tennis courts.

and water hazards. Tee time reservations are recommended; call ☎ 305-294-5232.

Tennis aficionados can hold court at the **Islamorada Tennis Club**, located bayside at MM 76. Open every morning and evening, the club offers four clay courts and two hard courts, along with a complete pro shop with equipment rentals and sales. There is a guest rate for play; call ☎ 305-664-5340 for information.

Shop Till You Drop

Like everything else in the Keys, shopping is a laid-back experience, especially when you're in Key West and exploring the galleries and boutiques of historic Old Town. Shopping along the Overseas Highway carries a certain element of surprise, because you never know when some roadside shop or stand will catch your eye and compel you to turn the car around.

You won't find gigantic indoor malls with multi-level department stores in the Keys. You won't find much haute couture, either. But what you will find are funky, eclectic souvenir shops selling everything from plastic green alligators and colorful seashells to paintings and sculpture created by the many artists who make their homes in the Keys. There are equipment shops to outfit you for your favorite watersport, be it swimming, fishing or diving. And clothing stores to dress you "conch" style. In fact, it might be a good idea to pack an extra duffel bag to hold all those "must-haves" you're bound to find during your shopping venture in the Keys.

TIP

Unless noted otherwise, all shops are open daily, but hours vary seasonally, so call before you visit.

Key Largo

The Shell Man
Don't bother going shelling on the beach. Just stop in at The Shell Man, selling shells of all shapes and sizes, as well as clothing, jewelry, wicker furniture and lamps – some ceramic, some made of shells. MM 106 (B); ☎ 305-451-0767.

Divers Outlet
A complete line of equipment and accessories for the diver, including wetsuits, weights and belts, tanks, snorkel gear, regulators, gauges, BCs, underwater cameras, accessories and lots more. The best part is, products are sold for as much as 60% off retail. Their knowledgeable staff will help you find what you need. MM 106 (B); ☎ 305-451-0815 or 800-DIVE-USA, www.diversoutlet.com.

T-Shirt City and **Sandal Factory Outlet**
So you went to the Keys, and all they got back home was a T-shirt? Well, this is the place to get that beloved gift, and you'll find a large selection to choose from. You'll also find men's, women's and children's apparel, as well as an extensive line of polarized sunglasses. Also on-site is Sandal Factory Outlet, offering an array of brand-name sandals and boat shoes, including Birkenstock, Sperry Topsider, Nautica and Dockers. MM 102 (O); ☎ 305-453-4266.

Another T-Shirt City and Sandal Factory Outlet is located at MM 82 (O) in Islamorada; ☎ 305-664-9700.

Island Smoke Shop
This shop carries a great variety of cigars, including their own "El Original," and hard-to-find brands. They also carry a selection of pipes and tobaccos. Shipping is available. MM 103.4 (B); ☎ 800-680-9701.

Florida Keys Jewelry
Here's a great selection of nautical-themed jewelry, including treasure coins mounted on 14K gold; crab, conch shell and dolphin charms; mermaid pins and more. Many pieces are custom-made or one-of-a-kind, and prices are reasonable. The store also carries a large selection of pre-owned jewelry, at discount prices. Closed Sundays. MM 103 (B); ☎ 305-453-0177.

Largo Cargo Gifts
This one-stop shop for souvenirs and collectibles seems to sell everything except the kitchen sink. Merchandise includes glass figurines, women's jewelry, T-shirts for all ages, kids' toys, picture frames, souvenir fish dishes and ashtrays, candles and a variety of Key lime products. MM 103.1 (O); ☎ 305-451-4242.

World Watersports
Their motto is "everything you need to get wet," and they mean it. You'll find an enormous selection of name-brand equipment and gear for a variety of watersports, including windsurfing, kayaking, sailing, water-skiing and surfing. Extreme sports junkies can choose from the latest in wakeboards. Those who want a relaxing ride over the waves can opt for small, one-man sailboats from Escape. The store also features a large selection of dive and snorkel

products as well as underwater cameras. MM 100 (O); ☎ 305-451-0118 or 800-2-GET-WET.

Key Lime Tree
Everything for the Key lime lover! From skin and hair care products to crackers, dips and spreads, mustards, pastas, candies, cakes, juices, tea and coffee, you'll find more than 80 different products, all made with Key lime juice. If you want to grow your own, you can even buy a Key lime tree. MM 95 (O); ☎ 305-853-0378 or 800-870-1780.

Key Lime Tree has every Key lime product under the sun, including the tree itself.

Anthony's
Enhance your Keys-style wardrobe at this complete women's clothing store, offering swimsuits in a variety of styles and designs along with casual cover-ups. Other selections include sportswear, lingerie, sleepwear and accessories. Petite and junior sizes are available. MM 98.5 (Median); ☎ 305-852-4515. Anthony's has two other Keys locations: Islamorada at MM 82 (B), ☎ 305-664-3530; and Marathon at MM 50 (B), ☎ 305-743-5855.

Islamorada

Treasure Village
It's hard to miss Treasure Village, with the gigantic two-story lobster standing out front. Inside is a collection of art and gift shops, including leather and pottery stores, a glass emporium, a Caribbean furniture store and a gift shop selling souvenirs, T-shirts, jewelry and a variety of other trinkets. The village's tropical courtyard atmosphere invites strolling or relaxing with a treat from the bakery. Try the frozen chocolate-coated Key lime pie on a stick. MM 86.7 (O); ☎ 305-852-0511.

Treasure Village is a must-stop attraction for shopping and souvenir hunting.

Blue Marlin Jewelry
Traditional and unconventional jewelry are part of Blue Marlin's extensive collection, which includes 14K and 18K engagement rings, wedding bands, chains, charms, earrings and dazzling stones. If you're looking for jewels with a nautical twist, Blue Marlin features gold bracelets and pendants adorned by conch shells hand-enameled by the owner. Other choices include jewelry decorated with dolphin, seahorses, fish, shells and sand dollars. The store is open daily from December to May, and closed on Sundays thereafter. MM 86 (O); ☎ 305-852-9880.

Garden of Eden
Selling mostly home furnishings, Garden of Eden features silk flowers and trees as well as beautifully crafted waterfalls and fountains of brass and concrete. They also carry arts and crafts, gift items and mailboxes. MM 82.3 (O); ☎ 305-664-5558.

Island Silver & Spice
Billing itself as a "tropical department store," Island Silver & Spice does indeed boast a varied selection of merchandise, including upscale gifts, coffees, bath and home decor items, jewelry, fashions for women and men, and a large assortment of bathing suits. It's a great place to stop if you want to increase your island wardrobe. MM 82 (O); ☎ 305-664-2714.

World Wide Sportsman
World Wide Sportsman has an enormous selection of fishing equipment.

Prepare to lose yourself for a while. This sprawling saltwater and fly fishing store has a huge inventory of equipment for the fishing enthusiast; it may take an hour to go through all the lures alone. But the store doesn't stop there. There are apparel sections for men, women and children, along with a selection of footwear and technical wear. An extensive gifts

section features distinctive foods and candies, including a variety of teas, beef jerky and Boston baked beans. Upstairs, visitors can browse an art gallery or stop in at the Zane Grey Lounge for lunch or a drink. Decked out in rich woods, with numerous eye-catching displays, the store's centerpiece is the 46-foot sister ship to Ernest Hemingway's famous *Pilar* – which also gives you some idea of how big the place is.

Outside is a full-service marina with live and frozen bait, ice, beer and sodas, wet slips and dockage. MM 81.5 (B); ☎ 305-664-4615.

Coral Reef Gifts
This charming little boutique sells lots of trinkets and souvenirs, including jewelry, postcards and home decor items. A full line of Key lime products includes taffy and mustard; other gourmet foods are also for sale. There is a JCPenney catalog order department. MM 80.4 (O); ☎ 305-664-2622.

Marathon

Bougainvillea House Gallery
Operated by a group of local artists – each of whom takes turns using the work space – Bougainvillea displays and sells a variety of arts and crafts, including hand-woven baskets, stained glass, pottery, jewelry (from the resident goldsmith) and nautical-themed ceramics. MM 53.5 (B); ☎ 305-743-0808.

Lazy Lizard
Whimsical gift items include hand-painted furnishings, tropical cookbooks, island music and Caribbean-style clothing, beach bags and purses. Located

in the Publix shopping center. MM 50.5 (O); ☎ 305-743-5001.

Driftwood Designs
Despite the name, you won't find much driftwood here. But they do offer a large selection of gift times, including jewelry in gold, silver, porcelain and glass, crystal and pewter, pottery, wind chimes, bronze sculptures, men's gifts and knives, Tiffany lamps and art glass, and "wearable art" T-shirts. Gift wrapping and shipping is available. Closed Sundays. MM 50 (B); ☎ 305-743-7591.

Aló Jewelers
This family-owned shop specializes in custom designs, with jeweled creations featuring coins from the *Atocha* shipwreck as well as a variety of shells, including conch. MM 50 (O); ☎ 305-743-9383.

B.P. Cargo
One of the Keys' favorite sons, Jimmy Buffett, inspired the designs that adorn more than 40 T-shirt styles at B.P. Cargo, including *Margaritaville* and *Son of a Son of a Sailor*. Buffett tapes, videos and books are also featured, along with "Caribbean Soul" shirts and more. MM 49.5 (O); ☎ 305-743-0555.

Lower Keys

Big Pine Flea Market
Although it's open year-round, the flea market is busiest with merchandise and customers from October to May. As you might expect, it features a little bit of everything, from clothing to housewares to jewelry and much more. MM 30.5 (O), Big Pine Key; ☎ 305-872-4103.

Sherman's Nautical Emporium
A gigantic fish mural points the way to Sherman's, where you'll find a variety of gift items, including T-shirts, jewelry, mermaid and dolphin statues, and unique lanterns sculpted in marine designs. They also sell custom mailboxes, furniture, clothing for men, women and children, and gear for swimming, diving and fishing. MM 24.5 (O), Summerland Key; ☎ 305-745-1748.

Sherman's also features a gallery showcasing the work of local artists.

Key West

Old Town

Abaco Gold
All that glitters is gold at this Old Town shop, featuring the jewelry collections of about 20 designers. If you're looking for a collectible from your trip, the "Sea Theme" collection is a beautiful assortment that includes sand dollar pendants, bracelets and rings, diamond dolphin brooches, multi-shell pierced earrings and starfish pendants with rubies. 418 Front Street; ☎ 305-296-0086.

Birkenstock of Old Town
Comfortable and cool, Birkenstocks are the ideal shoes for exploring Key West on foot. Styles for men, women and children with leather, suede and nubuck options. Full-service repair is also available. 610 Duval Street; ☎ 305-294-8318 or 800-330-2475. Another location in Marathon is at MM 51 (O), ☎ 800-797-2475.

The Cat House
Fittingly enough, this shop is housed in a former "cathouse" at 411 Greene Street between Duval and Whitehead. If you love cats, you'll wish you had nine

lifetimes to explore its collection of clothing, household items, jewelry, crystal figurines, calendars and computer items – all themed around your favorite feline friends. ☎ 305-294-4779.

Colombian Emeralds International
The green fire of emeralds gleams from hundreds of different settings here, where you'll find a large selection of both rough and cut Colombian emeralds. The shop also specializes in rare conch pearls and fine jewelry crafted from sapphires, diamonds, tanzanites and rubies, as well as 14K and 18K Italian gold jewelry, quality watches and other gemstone jewelry. Certified appraisals are offered. 400 Front Street; ☎ 305-294-2060 or 800-666-3889. Closed Wednesdays.

Cuba! Cuba!
Immerse yourself in the culture of the island nation only 90 miles away. Items include paintings by Cuban artists, T-shirts, books about Cuba, cookbooks, CDs from contemporary Cuban musicians, and collectibles such as handmade Cohiba ashtrays and hand-sculpted figurines. 814 Duval Street; ☎ 305-295-9442 or 800-621-3596; www.islandstore.com.

Key West Aloe
If you thought aloe was only useful for sunburns, you'll be surprised at the variety of products made from this ancient, therapeutic plant. In addition to after-sun lotion and body moisturizer, Key West Aloe sells fragrances, cosmetics, shampoo and a host of other treatments. 524 Front Street; ☎ 305-294-5592 or 800-445-2563; www.keywestaloe.com. Key West Aloe is also located in Marathon, MM 48 (O), ☎ 305-743-2580.

You can observe the production of aloe products at Key West Aloe's lab and factory outlet at 520 Greene Street.

Key West Hand Print Fashions
Be your own artistic canvas, wearing designs created by Key West artists and transferred onto handcrafted fabrics, fashions and accessories. Their collection of original art captures the breezy island spirit of Key West and features more than 3,000 exclusive, copyrighted designs. The store is housed in the Curry Warehouse, a registered historical landmark built around 1880 as a tobacco holding warehouse. 201 Simonton Street; ☎ 305-294-9535 or 800-866-0333.

Key West Key Lime Shoppe
Pucker up for the tart and creamy taste of Key lime pie, along with a host of other goodies at this charming corner shop. Choices include Key lime fudge, jelly beans, and white chocolate chip cookies. They also sell Key lime teas, oil, mustard and calypso dip. Or you can pick up some Key lime shampoo, bath gel, soap or moisturizer. 200A Elizabeth Street; ☎ 305-296-0806 or 800-376-0806; www.keylimeshop.com.

Key West Madhatter
Top off your visit to Key West with a stop at this unique shop, selling more than 2,000 hats ranging from straw hats and visors to fancy hats fit for a wedding. There are hats for men, women, kids and even dogs. Located in the Hilton Resort, 253 Front Street; ☎ 305-294-1364; www.kw-madhatter.com.

King's Treasure Tobacco
Offering a wide selection of premium cigars, including Davidoff, Montecristo and Dunhill, along with a variety of pipes, pipe tobaccos, and accessories such as pipe racks, pouches and lighters. Specialty items include humidors and quality pens. 106 Duval

Street; ☎ 305-294-4477 or 888-470-4477; www.kingstreasuretobacco.com.

Whitfield Jack, Jewelry Genius

Whitfield Jack has been designing jewelry in Key West for more than 25 years.

Before you fret about Jack's seeming lack of modesty, take a look at his creations. There is an octopus with ruby eye coiling around the cord of a necklace; a gleaming gold Neptune reclining against a gold chain, trident in hand; a rose gold seahorse nestled against a yellow gold coral branch adorned by an emerald. These are eye-catching designs, and all are completely original, hallmarked and copyrighted by the designer, and available in 14K and 18K gold. 200 Elizabeth Street; ☎ 305-294-7092 or 800-845-2243; www.jewelrygenius.com.

Mallory Square

Shopping, attractions, entertainment and the nightly sunset celebration – all at Mallory Square.

A must for Key West shoppers and a great place to wander. Browse the **Sponge Market**, with its collection of natural sponges, sea sponges, and bath products, then peruse the bins filled with colorful seashells at the Shell Warehouse, where you'll also find pearl jewelry and other gift items. Pick up a one-of-a-kind souvenir at the **Conch Store** or **Caribbean Cargo** before stopping at the conch fritter stand for a scrumptious treat. Refreshing drinks and ice cream are available at the **Island Juice Bar**. See page 364 for more information about Mallory Square.

Mallory Square is also home to the **Key West Aquarium**, the **Shipwreck Historeum**, the **Key West Art Center**, the **Waterfront Playhouse**, the **Key West Historic Memorial Sculpture Garden** and the **Key West Chamber of Commerce**. Enjoy a taste of Cuba at **El Meson de Pepe** restaurant and the **Cayo Hueso y Habana Historeum**, an empo-

rium of colorful shops and memorabilia. And both **Old Town Trolley** and the **Conch Tour Trai**n depart from Mallory Square.

Attractions

Whether you want to commune with nature, take a trip back in time or just relax and have fun, attractions in the Keys and Key West have enough variety to suit your mood. With rare exceptions, all are open daily, though some have limited hours in the off-season. Call individual attractions for days and hours of operation during your stay.

Upper, Middle & Lower Keys

On the Wild Side

JOHN PENNEKAMP CORAL REEF STATE PARK
MM 102.5 (O)
Key Largo
☎ 305-451-1621
www.pennekamppark.com
Admission: $4 per car and 50¢ per person. For activity fees, see below.

The first undersea park in the nation and home to the only living coral reef in the continental US, John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park extends three miles into the Atlantic Ocean and is about 25 miles long. Together with the adjacent Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary, it encompasses about 103 nautical square miles of coral reefs, seagrass beds and mangrove swamps.

Snorkelers and divers can take in a spectacular underwater view that includes more than 50 varieties of coral, 500 species of fish and myriad other fascinating sea creatures. Snorkel tours depart daily at 9 am, noon and 3 pm. The cost is $25.95 for adults and $20.95 for children, or for a sail-and-snorkel trip, $31.95 adults and $26.95 children; call ☎ 305-451-1621 for reservations. For divers, an on-site PADI five-star dive facility offers two-location, two-tank dives to various reef sites, while advanced divers can take in some impressive wrecks. A variety of certification courses are also offered. The fee for a dive is $39 per person, plus $29 if you need to rent gear. Call ☎ 305-451-6322 for more information.

Those who want to view the underwater action from above the waves can take a high-speed glass-bottom boat tour aboard the park's air-conditioned, 149-passenger catamaran ($18 for adults, $10 for ages three-11). Visitors can rent a boat, canoe or kayak by the hour ($27.50-$50.00), the half-day ($90-$185), or the full day ($160-$325) and explore the park's lush mangrove habitats, teeming with coastal birds such as egrets, herons and roseate spoonbills. Call ☎ 305-451-6325 for reservations. Daily sailboat excursions are also available.

Fishing is permitted within designated areas in the park, though saltwater fishing licenses are required (for information about getting your license, see the box on page 331). Other activities include picnicking, swimming at Cannon Beach, featuring an authentic reconstruction of an early Spanish shipwreck lying 130 feet offshore, and self-guided walks along the park's marked nature trails, round out the activities at Pennekamp Park. Be sure to stop in at the park's visitor center, whose main attraction is a 30,000-gallon saltwater aquarium.

If you're camping, Pennekamp offers 47 full-facility RV and tent sites, with restrooms and hot showers available; the camping fee is $24 without electricity or $26 for a site with electricity. Call ☎ 305-451-1202 for reservations.

The fees for activities vary widely, and it is recommended that you call the park to get specific information about the activities that you are interested in.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

One of Pennekamp Park's most striking sights is a nine-foot-tall bronze statue called Christ of the Abyss, located underwater at Key Largo Dry Rocks reef. Symbolizing peace among men, it is a popular dive and snorkel site – and a frequent setting for underwater weddings.

INDIAN KEY STATE RECREATION AREA
Offshore at MM 78 (O)
Islamorada
☎ 305-664-2540
Tour fee: $1

Robbie's Marina offers twice-daily boat launches to Indian Key for $15, which includes the tour fee.

In 1830, New Yorker Jacob Housman purchased Indian Key with the intention of creating a town that would rival Key West. In a short time, the 11-acre island boasted hard-packed streets, homes, a general store, a bar and ballroom, a post office, warehouses and even a hotel with a bowling alley. Unfortunately for Housman, his island empire was threatened by Seminoles who were at war with the US during the mid-19th century, and in 1840, a large contingent of

Seminoles attacked the island, burning and looting as they went. Some island settlers were killed, but Housman and his wife escaped.

Guided and self-guided tours take visitors to the foundations of the various buildings that once stood, including the hotel and homes. They'll also see descendants of the tropical plants cultivated by one of the settlers, Dr. Henry Perrine. Call or visit the Islamorada Parks Visitor Center (number above), or Robbie's Marina, for more information.

LIGNUMVITAE KEY
STATE BOTANICAL SITE
Offshore at MM 77.5 (B)
Islamorada
☎ 305-664-2540
Tour fee: $1, or $15 with boat tour from Robbie's Marina (see *Boat Rentals*, page 314).

Spanish explorers believed that the lignumvitae had medicinal qualities and, hence, was the "wood of life," or lignumvitae *in Latin.*

Accessible by boat shuttle from Robbie's Marina (☎ 305-664-9814) at MM 77.5 (B), remote, unspoiled Lignumvitae Key is home to the tropical forest once common throughout the Keys. Threatened by development elsewhere, the lignumvitae tree thrives on pristine Lignumvitae Key. One-hour guided walks are given at 10 am and 2 pm, Thursdays to Mondays. Among the sights you'll take in is the Matheson House, built by financier William Matheson in 1919 and featuring the windmill-supplied power that island people used during simpler times.

No more than 50 people are permitted on the Key at one time. Visitors are advised to wear comfortable, closed shoes and to bring mosquito repellent. Tour boats depart a half-hour before tour times.

LONG KEY STATE PARK
MM 67.5 (O)
Long Key
☎ 305-664-4815
Admission: $3.75 for one person; 50¢ for each additional person in a group

The Spanish named it *Cayo Vivora*, or Rattlesnake Key. But don't worry – the name was only meant to describe the island's shape. Today, this park snakes along 965 acres and offers a wealth of activities, including canoeing, swimming, birding and fishing. Those who want to explore by foot can take the Gold Orb trail (named for a native spider, the Golden Orb), which is a 40-minute walk through mangrove swamps, hammocks and gumbo-limbo forests. Canoe rentals and a self-guided brochure are available for the Long Key Lakes Canoe Trail, an hour-long cruise through a shallow lagoon. The park also offers 60 tent or RV campsites with picnic tables, grills and water/electric hook-ups.

CRANE POINT HAMMOCK
MM 50 (B)
Marathon
☎ 305-743-9100
Admission: $7.50 adults; $4 students; free for children age six and under

This 63-acre thatch palm hammock offers a day of discovery and history, with two museums that bring natural history to life for both kids and adults. At the **Museum of Natural History**, visitors relive the days of Indians and pirates. Highlights include one of America's oldest shipwreck cannons, an underwater cave leading through a 15,000-gallon saltwater lagoon, and an interpretive nature trail through the hammock.

The **Florida Keys Children's Museum** features a tropical aquarium and terrarium, marine touch tanks, a natural history reading center, a huge shell collection, and an interactive pirate vessel complete with pirate clothes and treasure.

Other features of the hammock include snorkeling adventures, marine art on exhibit, and a nature trail leading to the Adderley Village Historical Site, home to Bahamian families in the early 1900s.

BAHIA HONDA STATE PARK
MM 37 (O)
Big Pine Key
☎ 305-872-2353
Admission: $4 per vehicle and 50¢ per person
Camping fee: $23.69 without electric, $25.84 with electric.

In 1992, Bahia Honda was rated Best Beach in the USA by Dr. Stephen Leatherman (also known as "Dr. Beach").

Encompassing 524 acres – including a small, offshore island – Bahia Honda State Park is blessed with extensive sandy beaches and deep offshore waters ideal for swimming and snorkeling. Activities abound on land and sea, including daily snorkel trips to Looe Key Reef in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, ocean kayaking, and bicycling along nearly four miles of paved road running through the park. Kayaks, snorkel equipment and bikes may all be rented through the park's concessions, ☎ 305-872-3210.

Also available for rent are fishing rods. A saltwater fishing license is required (see box on page 331), and there are regulations concerning size, number, method of capture and season. The park's 19-slip marina offers overnight rentals that include water and electric hook-ups, trash disposal and pump-out, and use of the bathhouse facilities.

Of course, if you want to just take it easy, rent a beach chair and relax on the sand or enjoy the park's numerous shaded picnic tables.

For those who want to stay and play, there are three duplex cabins accommodating up to six people each, as well as three camping areas offering 80 sites for both RV and tent campers. Restrooms and hot showers are nearby. Call the park office for reservations.

KEY DEER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
MM 30 (B)
Big Pine Key
☎ 305-872-2239
No fee

Encompassing about 8,000 acres on Big Pine Key, No Name Key and smaller surrounding Keys, the refuge was established to protect the elusive, endangered Key deer, smallest of all the white-tailed deer. You're most likely to catch a glimpse of these beautiful, delicate creatures during early morning and evening hours when they emerge from the forests to find food and water. The refuge also features a number of nature trails, an observation platform and visitor center. Turn right at the only light on Big Pine Key to reach the refuge headquarters.

WARNING

There are some do's and don'ts for safe viewing of the Key deer. It is most important to obey the speed limit on Big Pine Key; you never know when a Key deer may dart into your path. Also, don't try to feed the deer by hand or leave food for them. When they become accustomed to human interaction or human food, the deer are more likely to wander near homes, where they're vulnerable to dog attacks, or along roadways, where they look for handouts from people in cars.

Animal Attractions

DOLPHIN COVE

MM 101.9 (B)
Key Largo
☎ 305-451-4060 or 877-DOL-COVE (365-2683)
www.dolphinscove.com
Activity fees: Dolphin encounter, $125 per person or $20 to observe; Crocodile tour, $249; other activity fees vary from $25 and up

Dolphin Cove runs boat tours that offer a glimpse of native birds, manatees and wild dolphin pods.

This marine environment research and education center offers a range of marine educational programs, including dolphin encounters that allow guests direct, in-water interaction with Atlantic bottlenose dolphins. Available Saturdays and Sundays only, the program includes a 30-minute boat ride and informational briefing. Participants then get up-close-and-personal with the playful creatures, who engage

in a number of physical behaviors, including pushing swimmers by their feet through the water.

In addition, Dolphin Cove offers guided boat tours into the mangrove jungles and backcountry of Florida Bay and Everglades National Park. Back-country Florida Bay can also be explored on eco-snorkel trips and kayak tours. Champagne sunset cruises and sunset ecology tours are other options. Feeling brave? Take a nighttime crocodile tour to seek out the American saltwater crcocdile; these imposing, prehistoric residents of Key Largo are endangered.

How do you see a croc at night? Their eyes glow red!

THEATER OF THE SEA
MM 84.5 (O)
Islamorada
☎ 305-664-2431
www.theaterofthesea.com
Admission: adults, $17.25; ages three-12, $10.75, plus program fees (see below)
Hours: Ticket office is open from 9:30 am-4 pm; reservations office from 10 am-5 pm.

Get as close as you dare, or simply observe the fascinating marine animals at Theater of the Sea. Daily dolphin and sea lion performances showcase the animals' intelligence and dexterity, or you can view the dolphins up close on a "bottomless" boat ride. Also offered are guided tours of a variety of marine life exhibits.

The park's general admission covers the above, but visitors can also opt for a number of special interactive programs, including swimming with the dolphins, stingrays or sea lions. If you become a "Trainer for the Day" ($75 per person, ages 10 and up), you'll work side-by-side with trainers to learn about the care and training of dolphins and sea lions. You can also take a four-hour Dolphin Adventure Snor-

kel Cruise (adults, $55; ages two-12, $33), touring the ocean and bay and snorkeling at Cheeca Rocks Reef, or swim with the dolphins ($110 per person, ages five and up; children must be accompanied in the water by an adult).

Other features of the park include shark-feeding exhibitions, a touch tank, and a birds of prey exhibit.

DOLPHIN RESEARCH CENTER
MM 59 (B)
Marathon Shores
☎ 305-289-1121 (information)
www.dolphins.org
Tour fee: adults, $12.50; ages four-12, $7.50; plus program fees (see below).
Hours: One-hour walking tours are offered several times daily between 10 am and 4 pm; call the information line for current schedule. Dolphin Encounter is by reservation only (☎ 305-289-0002).

Within the natural lagoons of the Gulf of Mexico, you'll see dolphin training and feeding sessions on a guided walking tour through this non-profit facility. Special programs include Tips on Training (adults, $35; ages four-12, $30), which allows visitors to go behind the scenes during training sessions. Participants in Dolphin Splash ($60 per person; children under 13 must be accompanied by an adult), meet dolphins up close and in the water, but without swimming.

The facility's Dolphin Encounter program ($110 per person; children must be accompanied in the water by an adult), invites guests to participate in a playful, structured swim session with the dolphins. This program requires advance reservations, which must be made a month to six weeks beforehand. Reservations can be made for Dolphin Splash, but a few

walk-in spots are available every day. Tips on Training requires no advance reservations, but is limited to the first 12 people who sign up each day.

Blast From the Past

AFRICAN QUEEN
MM 100 (O)
Key Largo
☎ 305-451-4655
Cruise fee: $15 per person

See the actual boat used in the classic 1951 film starring Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn. Docked at the Holiday Inn Key Largo Resort, the boat is on tour during the summer and usually returns in the fall, so call before stopping by. Cruises are offered by reservation only.

PIGEON KEY NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
Old Seven Mile Bridge
Marathon
☎ 305-289-0025
www.pigeonkey.org
Admission: adults, $7.50; ages six-17, $5

Once the construction camp (1908 to 1912) for the Old Seven Mile Bridge, five-acre Pigeon Key is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a pioneer village, educational and research center. Many of the original worker's quarters have been preserved, including the Old Section Gang Quarters, the Negro Quarters and the Paint Foreman's House, relics from what was once a complete village that included its own post office and a school for the workers' children. More details on that era can be found in the Pigeon Key Museum, housed in the Assistant Bridge Tender's House.

Accessible by tram, Pigeon Key was home to the workers who constructed the original Seven Mile Bridge.

To reach Pigeon Key, visitors can pick up a tram at the Pigeon Key Visitor Center on Knight's Key (MM 47). Trams run every hour on the hour from 10 am to 4 pm. There are no concessions on the Key, but picnic tables are provided, and visitors are invited to bring lunch or snacks. You can also bring snorkeling equipment to explore the waters surrounding Pigeon Key.

Pigeon Key also plays host to a number of events, including art shows, concerts and folk festivals.

Just for Fun

SUNCRUZ CASINO
MM 100 (O)
Holiday Inn Key Largo Resort
Key Largo
☎ 305-451-0000 or 800-THE-KEYS
Fee: $10 per person

Vegas-style excitement on the high seas. Gaming includes slots, blackjack, craps, roulette and sportsbook. Guests also enjoy a welcome-aboard cocktail, complimentary appetizers and live entertainment. Cruises depart at 2 pm on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, and sail nightly at 5 pm, 7 pm and 9:30 pm. The schedule is subject to change.

Key West

Animal Attractions

KEY WEST AQUARIUM
Old Town
One Whitehead Street, Mallory Square
☎ 305-296-2051
Admission: adults, $8; ages three-12, $4

The Key West Aquarium became the city's first tourist attraction when it opened in 1935.

Part marine-themed attraction, part historical landmark, the Key West Aquarium opened in 1935; since then, it has welcomed countless thousands to view creatures from the deep, including sea turtles, stingrays and massive fish. Visitors can pet a live shark, handle conchs, starfish and other residents of the touch tanks, and witness daily feedings that are part of every guided tour.

Blast From the Past

AUDUBON HOUSE & TROPICAL GARDENS
Old Town
205 Whitehead Street
☎ 305-294-2116 or 877-281-BIRD
www.audubonhouse.com
Admission: adults, $8.50; students, $5

Built in the early 19th century, this historic house was originally the home of harbor pilot John Geiger and his family, and remained in the family for more than 120 years. Saved from demolition in 1958 by the Wolfson Family Foundation, the home was restored and dedicated as a public museum themed around the work of the great painter and ornithologist John James Audubon, who visited the Florida Keys and Dry Tortugas in 1832. Inspired by the area's spectacular water birds, Audubon created 18 new drawings for his "Birds of America" collection.

There are 28 first-edition Audubon works in the house, displayed in a setting of antiques purchased for the house at estate sales and European auctions. Reproductions of Audubon's works are available in the gift shop. Surrounding the home is an acre of tropical gardens featuring orchids and bromeliads, an herb garden and an 1840s-style nursery.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY HOME AND MUSEUM
Old Town
907 Whitehead Street
☎ 305-294-1136
www.hemingwayhome.com
Admission:adults, $8; ages six-12, $5

Visit the home where the Nobel prize-winning author penned some of his masterpieces, including *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *Death in the Afternoon*. To ensure his privacy, Hemingway built a rickety catwalk from the main house to his office in the loft of the pool house, but today's visitors can take the stairs.

Registered as a National Historic Landmark, the Spanish Colonial-style home was built from native rock taken from the grounds and is surrounded by lush gardens that are home to descendants of the author's own cats, which are polydactyl, or six-toed. Daily guided tours of the home are offered every 10 minutes.

MEL FISHER MARITIME MUSEUM
Old Town
200 Greene Street
☎ 305-294-2633
www.melfisher.org
Admission: adults, $6.50; ages six-12, $2

In 1622, a fleet of ships laden with gold and treasures from the New World departed Havana for Spain. Two days later, a hurricane struck and the entire fleet, including 550 people, were lost beneath the waves. In 1969, diver and treasure hunter Mel Fisher began his search for the sunken galleons, particularly the two that carried the bulk of the treasure – *Nuestra Señora de Atocha* and the *Santa Margarita*. By 1980, he had located the *Santa Margarita*, and five years later came the "motherlode" – the *Atocha* and its staggering stash of riches, including 24 tons of silver bullion, 180,000 silver pesos, 582 copper ingots, 125 gold bars and discs, and 1,200 pounds of worked silverware.

The Mel Fisher Maritime Museum also hosts touring exhibits throughout the year.

Today, treasures and artifacts from the two ships are the stars of the museum's collection, but other valuable articles are on display as well, including rare navigational instruments, military armaments, native American objects and tools of various trades that offer a glimpse into 17th-century life.

KEY WEST'S SHIPWRECK HISTOREUM
Old Town
One Whitehead Street, Mallory Square
☎ 305-292-8990
Admission: adults, $8; under 12, $4

Combining actors, films, laser technology and artifacts from the *Isaac Allerton*, which sank in 1856, the Shipwreck Historeum transports visitors back to the 19th century and the world of Key West's

"shipwreckers" – hardy souls who rescued crew from vessels that foundered on offshore reefs. They also salvaged cargo and, if possible, the ship itself.

Housed in a faithfully reconstructed wreckers warehouse, the three-story museum includes a 65-foot observation tower. Live shows recreate the wreckers era, and run continuously from 9:45 am-4:45 pm.

CURRY MANSION
Old Town
511 Caroline Street
☎ 305-294-5349
Admission: adults, $5; under 12, $1

Named for William Curry, a penniless Bahamian immigrant who reportedly made his fortune as a "salvager" (a rogue who preyed on shipwrecked travelers) Curry Mansion was begun in 1855 and completed by Curry's son Milton in 1899. But visitors will feel time has stood still when they take in the house's ornate trellises and balustrades, columns and colonnades, and period antique furnishings that have earned Curry Mansion a listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Other details include Tiffany glass, an 1853 Chickering piano and a widow's walk. The Curry Estate also includes a 28-room inn.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

A widow's walk is so named because it's where wives used to pace while waiting for their husbands to return from the sea.

FLAGLER STATION OVER-SEA RAILWAY HISTOREUM
Old Town
901 Caroline Street
☎ 305-295-3562
Admission: adults, $5; under 12, $2.50

Located at the entrance to the Key West Historic Seaport, the Flagler Station Historeum re-lives the days when trains connected Key West to the rest of the United States until a devastating hurricane destroyed the railway in 1935. The Historeum includes a reconstruction of the original Key West station, a themed mercantile store filled with railroad memorabilia and turn-of-the-century merchandise, and an actual Florida East Coast Railroad car displaying photographs and mementos from the "Railroad That Went To Sea."

KEY WEST MUSEUM OF ART & HISTORY
Old Town
201 Front Street
☎ 305-295-6616
Admission: adults, $6; students, $4

Occupying the beautifully restored US Customs House at Front and Greene streets – a Key West landmark for more than 100 years – this new museum showcases local, national and international exhibits of art and history.

FORT ZACHARY TAYLOR STATE HISTORIC SITE
Old Town
Southard Street, through the Truman Annex
☎ 305-292-6713
Admission: $4 per vehicle and 50¢ per person; pedestrians or bicyclists, $1.50

Construction began on the fort in 1845 and its name was bestowed in 1850, shortly after President Taylor died in office. Strategic in a number of conflicts, from the Civil War through the Spanish-American War and up to the Cuban Missile Crisis, Fort Taylor is today a National Historic Landmark. It's the centerpiece of an 87-acre park that includes picnic areas, food and drink concessions, fishing, barbecue grills and what many say is Key West's best beach.

EAST MARTELLO MUSEUM & GALLERY
3501 S. Roosevelt Blvd.
☎ 305-296-3913
Admission: adults, $6; ages seven-17, $3

Built by the US Army in 1862 to protect Fort Zachary Taylor during the Civil War, the East Martello Tower is a striking example of military engineering, modeled after the unyielding watchtowers of Italy's west coast. Today, the former stronghold houses permanent displays of Florida Keys history, sculpture, art and a variety of changing exhibits.

KEY WEST LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM
Old Town
938 Whitehead Street
☎ 305-294-0012
Admission: adults, $8; ages seven-17, $4

Since its construction in 1849, the Key West Lighthouse remained a vital aid to seafaring navigation

until it was decommissioned in 1969. Three years later, it opened to the public as a tourist attraction, and today houses turn-of-the-century lighthouse artifacts.

KEY WEST CEMETERY
Old Town
Margaret Street at Passover Lane
☎ 305-292-6829 (Tours)
Tour donation suggested

The colorful natives of the Conch Republic wouldn't let a little thing like the hereafter spoil their sense of humor. That's why you might find people gathered around certain headstones in the Key West Cemetery, chuckling at inscriptions like "I Told You I Was Sick," or "Devoted Fan of Singer Julio Iglesias." And one widow tempered her grief with a bit of levity: "At Least I Know Where He's Sleeping Tonight."

The still-active cemetery is the final resting place for more than 70,000 Key Westers, both ordinary and illustrious. It is also a popular place for strolls, bike rides and simple, solitary contemplation. Guided tours are offered Tuesdays and Thursdays through the Historic Florida Keys Preservation Board (☎ 305-292-6829).

HARRY S. TRUMAN LITTLE WHITE HOUSE MUSEUM
Old Town
111 Front Street
☎ 305-294-9911
Admission: adults, $8; ages 12 and under, $4

Called the "Little White House" since it was the vacation retreat of the 33rd president, Harry S. Truman, this two-story home – listed on the National Register of Historic Places – was actually built in

1890 as officers' quarters for the Key West naval station. In addition to military personnel, the house has hosted a number of distinguished guests, including inventor Thomas Edison, who resided here during World War I.

Harry Truman's Little White House is now part of the Truman Annex, a residential community which includes condominiums, townhouses and private homes.

Following Truman's tenure, the house was used by Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy as well as British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan. In 1996, the presidential legacy continued with the visit of Jimmy Carter and his family.

You'll see the original furniture used by the Truman family, along with rare photos and other artifacts. Guided tours are offered daily.

CONCH TOUR TRAIN
Boarding at Mallory Square
☎ 305-294-5161
Fee: adults, $18; ages four-12, $9

Take a 90-minute ride through time as your Conch Tour Train "engineer" guides you through 400 years of Key West history, from Indians and Spanish explorers to cigar barons and sponge magnates. Trains leave Mallory Square every 30 minutes starting at 9 am. Not staying in Old Town? For a nominal fee, you can take a shuttle from the Quality Inn on Roosevelt Boulevard to Mallory Square. The shuttle leaves the hotel every 15 minutes.

OLD TOWN TROLLEY TOURS
Boarding at Mallory Square
☎ 305-296-6688
www.historictours.com/keywest/kwtrolley.htm
Fee: adults, $18; ages four-12, $9

Relax in an old-fashioned, open-air trolley during a 90-minute, narrated tour of Key West that covers more than 100 points of interest. You can get off at

any regular trolley stop to shop, dine or see the sights, then re-board any trolley after that. Trolleys pass each spot at least every 30 minutes. The first trolley departs Mallory Square at 9:30 am, and 15 trolleys leave from Mallory daily.

FORT JEFFERSON & DRY TORTUGAS NATIONAL PARK
68 miles west of Key West
☎ 305-242-7700
www.nps.gov/drto
Camping fee: $3 per person/per day

In 1513, Ponce de Leon came upon a small cluster of islands off the coast of Key West, their shores dotted by sea turtles – hence, he named them "Las Tortugas." Later, "dry" was added to the name to let sailors know the islands were devoid of fresh water. Today, these seven islands composed of coral reefs and sand are a sanctuary for bird and marine life, and are a repository of history. Their central feature is Fort Jefferson on Garden Key, largest of the 19th-century American coastal forts. A visitor center at Fort Jefferson offers interpretive exhibits, self-guided tours and a picnic area, while ranger-led activities include bird and wildlife sightings, saltwater sportfishing, snorkeling, swimming and diving. A Florida saltwater fishing license is required (see box on page 331). Camping on Garden Key is permitted in a few primitive camp sites, available on a first-come, first-served basis. All supplies, including food and fresh water, must be brought in by the visitor. The park and Fort Jefferson are open all year; however, the fort closes at sunset.

Fort Jefferson is accessible only by boat or seaplane. Half-day trips are offered by **Seaplanes of Key West** ($159 per person, round trip; ☎ 305-294-0709

or 800-950-2FLY), departing from the Key West airport. Sailing daily from the Key West Seaport are the ***Yankee Freedom*** high-speed catamaran ($95 per person, ☎ 305-294-7009 or 877-327-8228); and **Sunny Days Catamarans** ($85 per person, ☎ 305-292-6100 or 800-236-7937). Both ferry services include on-board breakfast, lunch on the island, guided tour of Fort Jefferson, and use of snorkel gear.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

Fort Jefferson is the only US national park completely surrounded by water.

Just For Fun

MALLORY SQUARE
Old Town
Located on the waterfront between Whitehead and Duval streets
Information: ☎ 305-296-4557

Ground zero for Key West entertainment, Mallory Square is a busy hub of shops, attractions, restaurants and bars, and – perhaps most famous of all – the nightly sunset celebrations that take place on the dock. An hour before the sun goes down, crowds gather to mingle and watch a variety of street performers, from tight-rope walkers, contortionists and fire eaters to mimes, musicians and artists. Mallory Square's nightly sunset gatherings are a tradition for locals and visitors alike.

A DAY AT MALLORY SQUARE

Before the sun sets, an entire day of activity awaits at Mallory Square. Pick up a one-of-a-kind souvenir or gift at the Sponge Market and Museum, the Shell Warehouse, the Conch Store, the Clinton Square Mall, and Caribbean Cargo. Sample crunchy conch fritters at the Key West Conch Fritter Stand, or feast on Cuban Conch cuisine at El Meson de Pepe. Afterward, enjoy another taste of Cuba at the *Cayo Hueso y Habana Historeum*, an emporium filled with colorful shops and memorabilia, where you can watch cigars being hand rolled (see *Sunup to Sundown*, page 342).

RIPLEY'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT! ODDITORIUM
Old Town
527 Duval Street
☎ 305-293-9686
www.ripleys.com/keywest2.htm
Admission:adults, $10.95; ages four-12, $8.95

More than 1,500 jaw-dropping exhibits include the world's tallest man, the world's smallest camera, pirate torture chambers and a two-headed calf. Kids, don't try this at home – there's also a genuine vampire-killing kit and a recipe for making shrunken heads.

SOUTHERNMOST POINT
Whitehead and South streets, at the ocean

Where do you go when you can't go any farther? The Southernmost Point in the Continental United

States, of course. A large black, yellow and red buoy marks the southernmost boundary of the continental US. It's a great spot for photographs or to pick up a trinket from a nearby sidewalk vendor.

Festivals & Events

People in the Keys love to party, and their calendar of events proves it. While we couldn't possibly publish every event taking place, here are a few highlights. Before you visit, we suggest you contact the individual visitors bureaus or event organizers to verify dates and schedules.

TIP

For information on fishing tournaments, which take place year-round in the Keys, call the Florida Keys and Key West Fishing Hot Line at ☎ 888-FISH-KEYS.

January

Key West Literary Seminar

The Key West Literary Seminar is a great event for aspiring writers.

The annual Key West Literary Seminar celebrates the island's heritage as a writer's haven, with four days of activities featuring participation by nationally and internationally recognized authors, as well as editors and publishers. Events include panels and discussions on the craft of writing, readings, book signings, and walking tours of Key West's literary sites; for information, call ☎ 888-293-9291, www.keywestliteraryseminar.org.

March

Marathon Seafood Festival
Usually held at the Marathon airport, this popular annual event features mountains of seafood, including crab and lobster, plus music, dancing, arts and crafts displays and lots of beer. ☎ 305-743-5417.

April

Conch Republic Independence Celebration
An annual festival commemorating the Conch Republic's mock secession from the United States in protest of a US Border Patrol roadblock on US-1 in 1982. Highlights of the 10-day celebration include a re-enactment of the secession according to the motto, "We seceded where others failed." A parade down Duval Street, sea battles, and a "drag race" are part of the fun. ☎ 305-296-0213. www.conchrepublic.com.

July

Independence Day
Celebrations are planned throughout the Keys. Contact the individual visitors bureaus for details.

Hemingway Days Festival
The anniversary of Ernest Hemingway's birthday on July 21 is celebrated by a 10-day festival that includes a street fair, a Hemingway look-alike contest, a short story contest, a writer's workshop and conference, walking tours of Key West's Hemingway sites, a party at the Hemingway Home and Mu-

seum, and a 5K run. ☎ 305-294-4440. www.hemingwaydays.com.

August

Lobster Season
The season starts throughout the Keys on August 6 and lasts through March. For rules and regulations, call the Florida Marine Patrol, ☎ 305-289-2320.

September

Islamorada Heritage Day
Celebrate Islamorada's history through tours of the Islamorada Heritage Trail, golf and tennis tournaments and family events at Cheeca Lodge. Call the Islamorada Chamber of Commerce, ☎ 305-664-4503, for more information.

WomenFest
A five-day party in Key West for lesbians featuring women's scuba and snorkel trips, champagne sunset sails, drag shows, Key West tours, comedy shows, a scavenger hunt, a Saturday night gala, street fair, lesbian film festival, wet T-shirt contest and more. ☎ 305-296-4238; www.womenfest.com.

October

Fantasy Fest
This outrageous annual festival has been bringing revelry and excitement to the streets of Key West for more than 20 years. Events include lavish costume balls, a Masquerade March through Old Town, a

street fair, the Pretenders in Paradise costume contest, a Caribbean-flavored Goombay celebration and even a Pet Masquerade. The 10-day party comes to a close with the Fantasy Fest Parade, complete with spectacular floats. Plans to attend these popular events must be made far in advance, as reservations are hard to come by. ☎ 305-296-1817. www.warptime.net. For more on the two-day Goombay Festival, call ☎ 305-293-8305.

One Fantasy Fest costume alone could use up to 5,000 yards of stringed sequins.

Key West Theatre Festival
A 10-day event showcasing the work of emerging playwrights and featuring world-premiere performances, opening and closing galas, play readings and a playwrights' forum. ☎ 305-292-3725 or 800-741-6945; www.keywesttheatrefestival.org.

November

Cuban-American Heritage Festival
Key West honors its Cuban heritage during five days of festivities that include a symposium, a Duval Street fiesta, concert, elegant cigar dinners, Cuban Heritage Trail tours, and a coast-to-coast conga line. ☎ 305-295-9665; www.cubanfest.com.

Island Jubilee
This four-day festival in Key Largo features a cooking contest, country dance, outdoor arts and crafts, food, live entertainment and children's activities. ☎ 305-451-1414.

George Bush – Cheeca Lodge Bonefish Tournament
An all-release tournament to benefit the Nature Conservancy's Florida Keys Initiative, and the George

Bush Presidential Library Foundation. Call Cheeca Lodge, in Islamorada, for information; ☎ 305-664-4651 or 800-327-2888; www.cheeca.com.

Old Island Days
Key West's unique history, heritage and traditions are the focus of this event, which starts in November and runs through May. Events include arts and crafts shows, theatrical productions, musical performances, a children's pageant, home and garden tours, and a conch shell-blowing contest. ☎ 305-294-9501.

December

Island Art Fair
This annual event on Big Pine Key features artists, craftspeople and vendors displaying and selling a variety of wares, food and beverages. Chamber of Commerce building, MM 31, ☎ 305-872-2411.

Holiday Celebrations
A variety of holiday events throughout the Keys includes concerts, ballets and boat parades. Call the individual visitors bureaus or event organizers for details.

Arts & Culture

The arts are alive and well in the Florida Keys, particularly in Key West, whose literary heritage flavors many of its cultural events. When you want to top off a day of snorkeling, diving or parasailing with

a night at the theater or symphony, the eclectic Keys are the place to do it.

Performance Venues & Organizations

Upper, Middle & Lower Keys

Key Players
Based in Key Largo, this Upper Keys community theater group has been staging local performances for more than 20 years. For schedule, call ☎ 305-453-0997.

Marathon Community Theatre
This local group performs comedies, musicals, dramas and play readings. ☎ 305-743-0994.

South Florida Center for the Arts
This Key Largo-based organization presents five public concerts between January and March, along with a number of special events, including community theater. ☎ 305-453-4224.

Key West

The Red Barn Theatre
Recently celebrating its 20th anniversary, the Red Barn's season runs December to June, with productions ranging from dramas to musical comedy. Special events include play readings and post-performance discussions. ☎ 305-296-9911.

The Waterfront Playhouse
Adjacent to Mallory Square, the playhouse showcases regional theater at its best, with plays, musicals and classes. Performances run year-round. ☎ 305-294-5015.

Key West Theater Festival
The play's the thing during this annual fall festival. ☎ 800-741-6945 or 305-292-3725.

Tennessee Williams Fine Arts Center
Located on the campus of Florida Keys Community College, it's the largest and best-equipped theater facility south of Miami. In addition to theatrical productions, the center has hosted the New York City Ballet, the Irish Rovers and other illustrious performers. Programs of chamber music, string quartets and solo recitals are also on the schedule. The season generally runs fall through spring. ☎ 305-296-1520 or 305-296-9081.

Key West Symphony
Premiering in 1998 to national praise, this orchestra features classical musicians and soloists from around the country, including members of the Chicago Symphony, the Washington DC National Symphony and the New York Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. Performances run from fall to spring at the Tennessee Williams Fine Arts Center, ☎ 305-296-1520.

Art Galleries

More than 80 art galleries line the Overseas Highway and the streets of Key West. Highlights include the **Rain Barrel Artisans' Village**, in Islamorada at MM 86.7 (B), featuring a large selection of paint-

ings, jewelry and works in clay, glass, wood and metal, produced by local artists and craftspeople. ☎ 305-852-3084.

In Key West, galleries abound, particularly in the 700 to 1200 blocks of Duval Streets. Here, art lovers will discover the works of local, national and international artists, including works from Haiti and Cuba. From oils to watercolors, pottery, jewelry, metal and more, whatever your artistic preference, it's sure to be on display at one of Key West's galleries or working studios.

Art galleries are numerous along the historic streets of Old Town Key West.

TIP

You'll be enchanted by the underwater scenes created by **Wyland**, the marine-life artist acclaimed for his life-size outdoor murals, sculpture, watercolors and oil paintings, and other art pieces. There are two Wyland galleries along Duval Street in Key West and another at MM 80.9 in Islamorada.

Touring the Keys

Planes, tour trains and automobiles are some of your choices for touring the Keys. Be sure to refer to the boating and diving sections for more ideas; many dive and charter boats offer sunset and other types of tours on the water. Here are a few of the companies offering sightseeing excursions, followed by options for self-guided and walking tours.

Guided Tours

Upper, Middle & Lower Keys

To 'N Fro offers tours customized to fit your agenda.

To 'N Fro Tours
A variety of narrated tours includes an around-the-town tour of the Upper Keys, a tour of Pigeon Key that includes a stop at the natural history museum, and a complete Key West tour with a side stop at No Name Key to view Key Deer. They can also customize a tour to your specifications. Vehicles include six-passenger vans (the least expensive option), sedans, limousines and a bus. Airport transportation is also available. On Key Largo, ☎ 305-852-4514. www.tnfro.com.

Everglades Eco-Tours
A 1½-hour guided tour through Florida Bay and the saltwater portion of the Everglades aboard a six-passenger deck boat. You'll see stunning mangrove canopies, a fossilized reef wall millions of year old, and abundant wildlife along the way. Three tours are offered daily, including a sunset ecology tour; the cost is $35 for adults and $25 for children. Dolphin Cove, Key Largo, ☎ 888-224-6044.

Grand Air
See the Keys from the air and get the "big picture." A half-hour "flightseeing" tour takes you from Duck Key to the Seven Mile Bridge and out to Sombrero Reef. Based at the Marathon airport, the Cessna aircraft can take three passengers at a time. MM 52 (B), Marathon, ☎ 305-743-1995.

Fantasy Dan's
Ten- or 35-minute flights take in Key West and the Gulfside islands aboard a Cessna plane that can accommodate up to three passengers. Sugarloaf Airport, MM 17, ☎ 305-745-2217.

Key West

Conch Tour Train
A 90-minute ride through the winding streets of Key West highlights 400 years of history. Trains leave Mallory Square every 30 minutes starting at 9 am; (adults $18; children four-12, $9;☎ 305-294-5161).

Old Town Trolley Tours
Relax in an old-fashioned, open-air trolley during a 90-minute, narrated tour of Key West that covers more than 100 points of interest. Get off at any regular trolley stop and reboard at any time. The first trolley departs Mallory Square at 9:30 am; (adults $18; children four-12, $9; ☎ 305-296-6688).

KEY WEST'S MILITARY FORTS

Though they once protected the country's strategic southernmost shores, today Key West's military forts are open as historic sites or museums. They include **Fort Zachary Taylor** on the island's west side, **East Martello Tower** and **West Martello Tower** on the south shore, and **Fort Jefferson**, the largest masonry structure in the Western Hemisphere, located 68 miles west of Key West in Dry Tortugas National Park.

Seaplanes of Key West
Everyone gets a window seat on the seaplane to view sharks, rays and huge sea turtles on the way to Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas. The pilot also flies over the wrecks of the *Atocha* and *Margarita*. Flight time is about 45 minutes each way; ($159 round trip; ☎ 305-294-0709 or 800-950-2FLY).

Walking Tours

Upper, Middle & Lower Keys

Islamorada Historical Trail
A self-guided tour of Islamorada's historic sites. Stop by the Islamorada Chamber of Commerce for a brochure, MM 82.1 or call ☎ 800-FAB-KEYS.

Overseas Heritage Trail

At press time, the Overseas Heritage Trail was not completed.

Begun in 1993, and still a work in progress, Overseas Heritage Trail will stretch 106 miles from Key Largo to Key West when completed, and will feature fishing piers, self-guided walking trails and bicycle paths. The plan also calls for the use of old bridges that in some areas will be reconnected to link the Keys. As of this printing, seven sections made up the first 17.5 miles of the trail. However, there was no pamphlet or brochure available directing visitors to various points of interest. You may follow up by calling the Rails to Trails Conservancy of Florida in Tallahassee, ☎ 850-942-2379; www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt. The new trails will be under the management of the Department of Environmental Protection.

Key West

Island City Strolls
Discover Old Town Key West's historic neighborhoods on a 90-minute architectural trek that takes in shotgun cottages, unique "eyebrow" houses, and spectacular Victorian mansions. Or enjoy another favorite "haunt," the historic Key West Cemetery, on a 90-minute tour. Ninety-minute and two-hour bicycle tours take in Key West's historic homes and neighborhoods as well as the homes of famed authors like Tennessee Williams, Ernest Hemingway and Robert Frost. All tours are by appointment only; reservations are required. ☎ 305-294-8380; www.seekeywest.com.

Island City Strolls offers walking and bicycle tours.

Ghost Tours of Key West
Spooky fun awaits during a 90-minute walking tour of Key West's documented haunted houses and other mysterious locales. Tours depart nightly at 8 pm from the Holiday Inn La Concha, 430 Duval Street. Reservations are required; ☎ 305-294-9255.

Historic District Walking Tour
Take a self-guided tour covering 50 historical sites throughout Key West, with the help of *A Brief Historic Guide*, published by the Historic Florida Keys Foundation (☎ 305-292-6718) and available at the Key West Chamber of Commerce in Mallory Square. Historical aspects of the Upper and Lower Keys are also included (see page 378 for a sample historical walking tour of key west). A variety of other self-guided tour pamphlets are available at the chamber, including *Pelican Path*.

WALKING TOUR OF KEY WEST

Key West's Old Town Historic District and the surrounding areas are home to more than 2,500 historic structures. Look for the distinctive architectural style of "Conch Houses" – snug, trim structures with tin roofs; "Bahama Houses," with porches that wrap completely around the house; "eyebrow" windows, so called because they're partially covered by the slanting roof above; and the "gingerbread" look of Key West's Victorian-era homes.

- **Mallory Square:** The square, in the island's western corner, is named for Stephen Mallory, secretary of the Confederate Navy. It is home to the **Key West Aquarium**, the world's first open-air aquarium. At the southern end of the Square is the **US Customs House**, built in 1891 in Romanesque Revival style, now beautifully restored and housing the **Key West Museum of Art & History.**
- **Greene Street:** Steps away is 200 Greene Street and the **Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Museum**, which marks the entrance to the **Truman Annex**, a residential community and historic district. Within the Annex is the **Little White House**, now a museum, once the vacation retreat of the 33rd President, Harry S. Truman. The two-story home was built in 1890 as officers' quarters for the Key West naval station.

- **Whitehead Street:** Heading to Whitehead Street, you'll find the **Audubon House & Tropical Gardens**, a historic home dating back to the early 19th century that originally belonged to harbor pilot John Geiger and his family. Now it's a public museum themed around the work of the great painter and ornithologist, John James Audubon.
- **Caroline Street:** Turn north on Caroline Street to find **Heritage House Museum** and the **Robert Frost Cottage**, visited by the poet during the winter, then continue on to the **Dr. Joseph Yates Porter House**, a majestic residence that once belonged to this public health officer, who was instrumental in eradicating yellow fever. Farther up on your left will be **Curry Mansion**, built in 1899 for the son of millionaire Bahamian immigrant William Curry. Right by Curry Mansion is **Old City Hall**, built in 1891 in the Victorian Italianate style, and returned to service as Key West's principal government meeting facility in 1991.
- Duval Street: Dropping down to Duval Street, you'll come upon the **Oldest House Museum**, reported to be the oldest dwelling in the Keys (circa 1829). The site includes a detached kitchen, the only one remaining in South Florida. Farther up Duval is **St. Paul's Episcopal Church**, a Gothic Revival structure dating from 1919.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

From the balcony of today's **La-Te-Da Hotel**, 1125 Duval Street, Cuban patriot and writer José Martí delivered speeches to rally his countrymen in the fight to end Colonial rule in Cuba.

- **Eaton Street:** Head up Eaton Street to see the **Key West United Methodist Church**, the city's oldest religious structure, built between 1877 and 1892, and fondly referred to as "Old Stone." Farther up Eaton, you'll see the 1890s **Richard Peacon House**, whose recent owners have included designer Calvin Klein, and two splendid **Bahama Houses**, which were moved intact from Green Turtle Cay to Key West.
- **Key West Bight:** Turning west again, it's a stroll to the waterfront and the historic **Key West Bight**, now boasting a new boardwalk, but still echoing its maritime origins when the city was a major port and wrecking capital, with thriving shrimp, sponging and sea turtle harvesting industries.
- **Southard Street:** Now head east again to Southard Street and the **Harris School**, which began service as the community's high school in 1909. Farther east, off Margaret Street, is the **Key West Cemetery**, whose colorful headstone inscriptions inspire chuckles, while the final resting place of those who

died on the USS *Maine* in 1898 inspires sober reflection.

Also on Southard Street are a trio of homes constructed by pioneering Bahamians, including the **William Albury House**, the **John Lowe, Jr. House** and **Benjamin Curry, Jr. House**. Cross Simonton down to Duval to reach the **San Carlos Institute**, founded in 1871 as a cultural center for the Cuban exile community. The building that stands today was constructed in 1924 and remains the property of Cuba.

- **Whitehead Street:** Then drop back to Whitehead to see the **Monroe County Courthouse**, built in 1890 and distinguished by its Second Empire clock tower. Farther along on Whitehead is the **Cornish Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church**, whose congregation was originally organized at the end of the Civil War by Sandy Cornish, a freed slave, and other black citizens. Built in 1894, today the church serves Key West's Bahama Village community. Keep going on Whitehead and you'll come upon the **Hemingway Home and Museum**, owned by the Nobel prize-winning author from 1931 to 1961 and boasting the first swimming pool built in Key West. Beyond that is the **Key West Lighthouse Museum**, constructed in 1849 and functioning today as a tourist attraction housing turn-of-the-century lighthouse artifacts.

Best Places to Stay

As you're traveling along the Overseas Highway through the Florida Keys – the Atlantic Ocean on one side and Florida Bay or the Gulf of Mexico on the other – there are points along the road where the bodies of water are barely a stone's throw apart. Therefore, you'd be hard-pressed to find a property that *isn't* waterfront in the Keys. But don't expect grand resort beaches in every case. Keys beaches tend to be smaller than those found along mainland coasts and, while the larger resorts do boast expansive beach areas, many Keys properties feature moderate to small beaches.

TIP

Sales tax and hotel or bed taxes are usually added to the daily room rates. Be sure to ask about these taxes when you make your reservations, as they can add significantly to the cost of the room.

From Luxury to Laid-back

Accommodations in the Keys are listed in descending Mile Marker order.

Most of the larger Keys offer a variety of national hotel chains and local properties. The latter vary in quality depending on your expectations. If you're accustomed to turn-down and 24-hour room service, some of the efficiency-type lodgings might not suit you. However, they're invariably charming, secluded and picturesque – not to mention a good value – and run by friendly folk willing to stop and offer tips on local dining and recreation.

In Key West, the mix includes luxury resorts, brand hotels and guesthouse/bed-and-breakfast accommodations, many housed in historic Victorian homes and gingerbread conch houses.

While some properties encourage total inertia, most offer a range of activities, including bicycle and watercraft rentals, fishing excursions and eco-tours. Additionally, a number of dedicated dive resorts feature packages that include instruction and equipment. And if you're arriving via RV, you've come to the right place. There are lots of campgrounds available, many offering the same recreational amenities as their hotel counterparts.

Specialized Rentals

For couples and friends traveling together, or large families who want more space, a specialized rental such as a condo, townhouse or single-family home might be the way to go. These units are basically a "home away from home," complete with furnishings, towels, linens, kitchen ware and laundry facilities. Some may be part of a vacation ownership (timeshare) resort, while others are privately owned or represented by a realty company.

Unlike hotel or motel units, however, they're usually not available on a nightly basis, but rent by the week, month or season. Also unlike hotels and motels, daily maid service is not always provided; check with the individual property.

Rates vary according to unit type, location, and season. For example, you might pay $1,100 for a week in a townhouse at the Florida Bay Club in Key Largo or $1,500 for a week in a condo unit at the Truman Annex in Key West.

Following are just a few companies offering vacation rentals in the Florida Keys. For more information or more listings, call the individual chambers of commerce, listed in *The Keys A to Z*, page 481.

Many efficiencies along the Overseas Highway offer fully equipped kitchens as well as outdoor grills – so you can cook what you catch!

Although most properties along the Overseas Highway offer the illusion of seclusion, in truth, you're never far from civilization – particularly in Key Largo, Islamorada, and Marathon, where restaurants, bars, banks, convenience stores and souvenir shops are often within walking distance. If you have a kitchen to stock, the large grocery chains, Publix and Winn-Dixie, have locations throughout the islands.

THE PERILS OF THE OVERSEAS HIGHWAY

Take care while driving along the Overseas Highway when looking for your hotel, especially in Islamorada. Properties tend to be waterfront, and are not necessarily visible from the road. Most addresses are given in Mile Markers (MM 88, MM 42, for example), which are posted at each mile, and many properties also display prominent signs. If you know whether your hotel is on the Florida Bay (B) or Atlantic Ocean (O) side, you'll have a better idea of where to look. However, if you drive past your destination, keep going and turn around when you can. The locals know the road well and zip along at a brisk pace, so it's simply not safe to slow down or stop suddenly, especially since the highway is, for the most part, only one lane in each direction.

Seasonal Rates

Winter and spring are high season in the Florida Keys, when rates average 20% to 30% higher than in summer and fall, though some hotels have higher summer rates as well. Reservations are mandatory in high season; however, there is a post-holiday lull in early January when vacancies are common. In some cases, you'll find "drive-in" discounts. Summer months are busy, too; that's when Floridians head to the Keys.

Unless otherwise noted, all rooms are air-conditioned with private baths.

The Alive Price Scale

Our price scale is designed to give you a general idea of costs, and reflects a basic year-round range of room rates, excluding holidays and special events that may command higher prices. Hotel suites or other special accommodations will also be higher. Remember, rates in the Keys are higher in winter and spring, with summer having its own "mini-high" season at some properties.

So if a property is designated "inexpensive-expensive," for example, its rates fall within that range throughout the year, with the lower end reflecting low season. You might find all-inclusive packages that bring the per-night rate down as well as mid-week specials. Rates are per room, based on double occupancy.

ACCOMMODATIONS PRICE SCALE	
Inexpensive	under $100
Moderate	$100-$200
Expensive	$200-$300
Deluxe	More than $300

TIP

Mile Marker designations in the Upper, Middle and Lower Keys include (B) or (O) to denote locations on the bay or ocean side of the road. Hotel mailing addresses and Web sites follow their Mile Marker designations. Mile Markers do not apply in Key West, the "end of the road."

Upper Keys

Key Largo

Resorts & Hotels

KELLY'S ON THE BAY
MM 104.2 (B)
☎ 305-451-1622 or 800-226-0415
www.aqua-nuts.com
Inexpensive-Moderate

Family-owned and -operated, this PADI Gold Palm winner is a dedicated dive resort specializing in personalized reef excursions for small groups. The on-

site Aqua-Nuts dive center offers PADI and NAUI scuba certification as well as a complete line of rental equipment. Dive boats depart twice daily to sites, which include Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary, Pennekamp Park and several wreck sites. Regularly scheduled night dives are also available, as are a variety of dive packages.

If diving's not on the agenda, the resort also offers free kayaking, snorkeling, a swimming area, hammock relaxation and a bayview Jacuzzi, while parasailing, personal watercraft and powerboat rentals are within walking distance.

No two rooms are alike at this 34-room resort, with accommodations ranging from economy rooms to efficiencies with kitchens. Complimentary breakfast is served al fresco under a thatched-roof chickee hut.

AMORAY DIVE RESORT
MM 104 (B)
☎ 305-451-3595 or 800-426-6729
www.amoray.com
Moderate

Hands-on owner Amy Slate makes sure everything stays ship-shape at this Caribbean-style dedicated dive resort, as notable for its expert programs as for its pleasing architecture and tropical decor.

One- to four-day dive packages include tanks and weights; full equipment is available at an extra charge. Open water referrals are their specialty, but the resort offers a range of programs, from resort courses to divemaster and specialty certifications, including PADI Rescue Diver, NAUI, and YMCA courses. The resort can also accommodate BSAC (British Sub Aqua Club) divers, but does not give certification in that system.

Daily dive trips depart aboard the resort's 45-foot catamaran, docked steps away from rooms. Snorkel trips are offered as well, with complimentary use of gear. Other recreation includes eco-tours and back-country tours to Everglades National Park, while dolphin swim programs are offered in conjunction with a local facility.

If you're taking the plunge in another sense, the resort can arrange all aspects of a wedding, including license, notary, flowers, catering and sunset cruises for the wedding party. And if an above-ground wedding is too mundane, you can get married underwater near the famed Christ of the Abyss statue in the Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary – a rite of passage that's been featured by the national media.

Accommodations at the resort vary from single and double rooms to small apartments and larger apartments with porches, some waterfront. Program fees are not included with accommodations.

NEPTUNE'S HIDEAWAY MOTEL
MM 104 (B)
☎ 305-451-0357
Inexpensive

Pets are welcome at Neptune's Hideaway, for a nominal fee.

Neptune's Hideaway offers low frills comfort on Florida Bay. Accommodations range from standard rooms to studios and one- or two-bedroom units, with all prices below $100 a night except for the beachfront Captain's Cabin, which sleeps up to seven, at a slightly higher rate. Rooms feature cable TV, coffee maker and refrigerator, while on-site amenities include barbecue grills, hammocks, a private beach and dock.

MARRIOTT KEY LARGO BAY BEACH RESORT
MM 103.8 (B)
☎ 305-453-0000 or 800-932-9332
www.fla-keys.com/keylargo/marriott.htm
Moderate-Deluxe

This full-service resort is packed with activities, from a PADI five-star dive facility to a nine-hole miniature golf course. Want to get wet? **It's A Dive Watersports Center** offers dive instruction and daily dive and snorkel trips, along with full array of watersports activities, including WaveRunners, parasailing, aqua cycles, kayaks, boat rentals, deep-sea and back-country sportfishing, private charters and sunset cruises.

Diving, miniature golf and watersports can be enjoyed at the Marriott Key Largo.

Landlubbers are pampered at a luxurious day spa featuring custom facials, sea salt scrubs and other treatments, while a 24-hour, state-of-the-art fitness center features weight training, stair steppers and treadmills. Other recreation includes tennis and water volleyball, a swimming area and private sunning beach, pool and Jacuzzi, and a Kids Club for ages five-13. Additionally, a complimentary water shuttle to the **SunCruz Casino** gaming boat anchored three miles offshore is provided.

Great dining is steps away at the resort's award-winning **Gus' Grille**, featuring "Floribbean" specialties and homemade desserts, late-night cappuccino and dessert at the **Piano Bar**, and Sunday brunch. At certain times of the year, continental breakfast is served poolside at **Flipper's Poolside Tiki Bar & Grille**, which also offers lunch and exotic tropical drinks later in the day. Frozen drinks, light snacks and full meals are also served at **Breezer's Bar & Grille**.

The resort's 153 oversized rooms, including 20 two-bedroom suites, feature wrap-around balconies, coffee makers, mini-bars, hair dryers, in-room safes, voice mail, dataports, HBO, guest choice movies and waterfront views.

JULES' UNDERSEA LODGE
MM 103.2 (O)
☎ 305-451-2353
Deluxe

Sleep with the fishes? Only at Jules' Undersea Lodge!

Giving new meaning to the term "oceanview," Jules' Undersea Lodge is located about 30 feet underwater in a lagoon, and guests must scuba dive to enter. Don't worry if you're not a certified diver – in fact, about 30% of the lodge's clientele aren't. You'll get a quick "resort course" from the staff that will be sufficient to get you to the lodge and back. They also offer complete certification courses.

The lodge features two bedrooms which can accommodate six guests, a "wetroom" entrance, and a common room. Guests enjoy all the comforts of standard hotel accommodations, including TV, VCR and phone. Room rates are per person, and include the full breakfast and dinner served in the common room.

LARGO LODGE
MM 101.5 (B)
☎ 305-451-0424 or 800-IN-THE-SUN
Inexpensive-Moderate

Largo Lodge is open to guests 16 years or older.

Framed by tall palms, a sandy path off the Overseas Highway leads to the secluded, adult resort Largo Lodge, where tropical landscaping and a private beach provide an intimate setting for sunning and swimming. Docking facilities are available on-site, while Pennekamp Park is less than a mile away.

Guests stay in one of six one-bedroom apartments, each accommodating up to four people, with living and dining areas, kitchen and screened porch.

ROCK REEF RESORT
MM 98 (B)
☎ 305-852-2401 or 800-477-2343
Moderate

In addition to a warm welcome from the owners, you'll get a cheerful "hello" from their pet cockatoo, Peaches, at this family-owned and -operated resort. Retreat from the outside world in three acres of tropical gardens, relax in an on-site Jacuzzi and hammocks and enjoy a private sandy beach, swimming/snorkel area and paddleboat. The resort's 110-foot fishing pier is the perfect place to catch a spectacular sunset over Florida Bay. Free boat ramp and docking facilities are available for boats up to 22 feet long.

Accommodations include beach cottages, efficiencies and standard rooms, all with expanded cable TV.

KONA KAI
MM 97.8 (B)
☎ 305-852-7200 or 800-365-STAY
www.konakairesort.com
Expensive-Deluxe

Kona Kai welcomes adults only, ages 16 and up.

A hidden gem, Kona Kai exudes tranquillity. Shaded walkways lead to a small white-sand beach, pier and pool. Guests enjoy such fun and games as beachfront ping pong, volleyball, horseshoes, basketball, shuffleboard and tennis. Those who want to get their feet wet can try pedalboating or kayaking, while bayside snorkeling, diving and fishing also await. Sunsets over Florida Bay can be savored from

the comfort of a beachside hammock or while barbecuing by the water.

Situated throughout the tropically landscaped grounds are four buildings housing one- and two-bedroom suites with full kitchens and cable TV.

SEAFARER FISH & DIVE RESORT
MM 97.6 (B)
☎ 305-852-5349
www.keysdirectory.com/seafarer
Inexpensive-Moderate

Seafarer operates a full-service dive and snorkel operation.

Set on the Florida Bay, the rustic Seafarer boasts a PADI Master living on-site, and dive trips departing directly from the resort. Scuba instruction, resort programs, open water referral certifications, advanced education and specialty courses are available, along with lessons in German, if requested. The resort services John Pennekamp park, the Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary, and surrounding waters. Night dives are also offered. Program costs are not included with accommodations.

Besides diving and snorkeling, the resort offers free use of kayaks, paddleboats, a sailboat and rowboat, along with on-site barbecue and picnic areas.

Guests have a choice of standard queen or double rooms, all featuring refrigerators, coffee makers and patios, as well as studio, apartment and cottage accommodations.

BAY HARBOR LODGE
MM. 97.5 (B)
☎ 305-852-5695
Inexpensive-Moderate

A leisurely atmosphere prevails at Bay Harbor Lodge, where chickee huts and hammocks invite to-

tal relaxation. Guests also enjoy a picturesque beach, heated pool and complimentary use of the property's boat, canoe and paddleboat, while shopping, dining, diving and other watersports are nearby. Accommodations include a mix of rooms, efficiencies and waterfront cottages. Honeymoon and longer-stay packages are available, along with group rates.

WESTIN BEACH RESORT
MM 97 (B)
☎ 305-852-5553 or 800-KEY-LARGO
www.1800keylargo.com
Moderate-Deluxe

Set on 12 acres within a picturesque hardwood hammock, and featuring a private, white-sand beach – one of the largest in the Keys – the Westin Beach Resort is a tropical retreat featuring two outdoor pools with waterfalls, a sauna and fitness center and a full range of watersports, including parasailing, snorkeling and diving, with Hobie Cats and personal watercraft available.

Other on-site recreation includes two outdoor heated pools (family and adult), sauna, fitness center with state-of-the-art equipment, a sundeck, nature trails, and two lighted tennis courts. Snorkeling, diving, deep-sea fishing, environmental tours, a sunset champagne cruise and tee times at a nearby golf club can all be arranged through the hotel. Dining options include a gourmet restaurant, a traditional café offering terrace seating, a tapas bar featuring nightly dancing, and two casual restaurants – one poolside, the other oceanfront.

The Westin Beach Resort's Kid's Fun Factory offers supervised recreation for children ages five-12.

Standard rooms and mini-suites are equipped with such amenities as coffee makers and refreshment centers, cable TV, two telephones with dataports, in-

room safes, robes and hair dryers, and balconies offering views of Florida Bay or nature trails. Refrigerators and microwave ovens are available on request. Jacuzzi suites include a wet bar and dining area.

OCEAN POINTE SUITES AT KEY LARGO
MM 92.5 (O)
☎ 305-853-3000 or 800-882-9464
www.thefloridakeys.com/oceanpoint
Expensive

Located just 10 minutes from John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, Ocean Pointe takes up more acreage than many oceanside resorts – 60 acres – with a larger-than-average beach, heated swimming pool with whirlpool spa, two lighted tennis courts, a marina with boat ramp and rental slips, volleyball court and watersports equipment. Accommodations are in spacious one- and two-bedroom suites with whirlpool tubs and full kitchens, should you wish to "eat in." A waterfront café serves snack-type foods like pizza, nachos and sandwiches, while a variety of restaurants are nearby. Honeymoon, dive and fishing packages are also available.

ISLAND BAY RESORT
MM 92.5
☎ 305-852-4087 or 800-654-KEYS (5397)
www.islandfun.com/islandbay
Inexpensive

Lining a sandy path, cottages are fronted by picnic tables and palm trees and promise an atmosphere of fun and conviviality at Island Bay Resort. Sunset beach barbecues, swimming, and snorkeling can be enjoyed on-site, while the resort's dive boat can accommodate up to six for excursions. While you're relaxing on the resort's small but lovely beach, don't be

surprised if you're visited by the seagulls, egrets, ospreys or herons that often stop by. Tropical fish, rays, horseshoe crabs and the occasional dolphin hang around the dock, where boat dockage is free.

With just 10 rooms, attentive personal service is assured at Island Bay. Accommodations include one-room efficiencies with small kitchens and one-bedroom apartments with queen beds and queen-size futons. All rooms feature refrigerators and cable TV.

TAVERNIER HOTEL
MM 91.8 (O)
☎ 305-852-4131 or 800-515-4131
www.tavernierhotel.com
Inexpensive

Built in 1928 and set among the old conch houses in the historic district of Tavernier, this renovated property catches the eye immediately with its quaint design and pink exterior that echoes the conch and coral of the Keys. Inside is a charming lobby area and rooms adorned with lace flower baskets. But all the modern conveniences are in place, including private baths, cable TV and small refrigerators in each room.

Guests can enjoy an outdoor hot tub and small fitness center. The ocean is a stone's throw away, but there is no beach on the property; the nearest is a half-mile away. The on-site **Copper Kettle Restaurant** (see *Best Places to Eat*, page 452) boasts the same charming cottage atmosphere as the hotel, and serves breakfast, lunch and dinner daily, with a menu covering everything from local favorites to international dishes. Dinner and bed & breakfast packages are available.

The original owners of the Tavernier Hotel also ran a small, hand-pumped gas station, which now serves as "The Cottage" – one of the hotel's larger rooms.

Specialized Rentals

FLORIDA BAY CLUB
MM 103.5 (B)
☎ 305-451-0101

Renting two- and three-bedroom townhouses, with weekly rates ranging between $1,100 and $1,300.

Campgrounds

KING'S KAMP
MM 103.5 (B)
☎ 305-451-0010
www.kingskamp.com
Inexpensive

With beautiful Florida Bay as the backdrop, RV and tent sites at King's Kamp include picnic tables, electric and water hookups, while tent sites also feature barbecue grills. Hotel rooms are also available, with or without private bathrooms, along with one-bedroom apartment suites and a private bayfront cottage that sleeps four.

For your convenience, there are private bathroom facilities, hot showers and a coin laundry. The camp's marina has a boat ramp for easy access and offers dockage on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. A number of dive boat charters are within a quarter mile, offering scuba and snorkel trips to nearby Pennekamp Park.

KEY LARGO KAMPGROUND AND MARINA
MM 101.5 (O)
☎ 305-451-1431 or 800-KAMP-OUT
Inexpensive

Sprawling across 40 lush acres just a mile south of Pennekamp Park, Key Largo Kampground and Marina offers two sandy beaches, a large heated pool

and kiddie pool, boat ramp and dock rental, a covered picnic area with TV and large barbecue grill, a playground, and activities including volleyball, shuffleboard, horseshoes, basketball and aquacize. Clubhouse activities feature bingo, square dancing, pot luck meals and holiday parties.

A shopping center with a supermarket, Kmart, bank and clinic is within walking distance of the Key Largo Kampground.

Services include 24-hour security, free cable TV, a general store, two bath houses, and pay phones. Facilities include 60 RV full hook-up sites, some shaded, and 38 tent sites with/without electric. A maximum of two pets on leashes is permitted. Waterfront sites are limited.

AMERICA OUTDOORS CAMPER RESORT
MM 97.5 (B)
☎ 305-852-8054
www.aokl.com
Inexpensive

Tropical hardwood trees provide privacy and shade at each of the 155 individual sites at America Outdoors Camper Resort. Other camping options include beach tent sites, waterfront sites with full hookups, and beachfront group camping for up to 100 people.

Modern comforts are at your fingertips, including a complete convenience store, laundromat, free satellite TV, two airconditioned, tiled bath houses, and a restaurant serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. There is an adult recreation hall, shuffleboard and horseshoes, and a full-service marina featuring a 170-foot pier and boat/pleasure craft rentals. Diving and snorkeling await next door at adjacent John Pennekamp State Park.

TIP

Camping is offered in most state parks, including John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, Bahia Honda State Park, and Long Key State Park. See *Attractions*, pages 343-349, and page 363.

Islamorada

Resorts & Hotels

LOOKOUT LODGE DIVE RESORT & MOTEL
MM 87.7 (B)
☎ 305-852-9915 or 800-870-1772
www.lookoutlodge.com
Inexpensive-Moderate

Lookout Lodge offers scuba and snorkeling excursions aboard the Sea Raven.

The compact Lookout Lodge offers dive instruction, open water referrals and certification, and guided dives aboard its own dive boat in groups of no more than 12 at a time.

Non-diving companions, meanwhile, can relax in the resort's small but lovely swimming and sunbathing area, featuring lounge chairs, a chickee hut and outdoor grilling facilities. The **Marker 88** restaurant (see page 453) is located next door.

Lookout Lodge offers a range of accommodations, including studio efficiencies and one- and two-bedroom suites, all with refrigerator, microwave oven, coffee maker, toaster, utensils, color TV with basic cable, and telephones with voice mail. Suites also have electric ranges, and some units have bayfront porches.

COCONUT COVE RESORT AND MARINA
MM 85 (O)
☎ 305-664-0123
www.coconutcove.net
Inexpensive-Moderate

With only 12 units, there's never a crowd at Coconut Cove, a relaxed, mom-and-pop style resort.

Set on seven acres, Coconut Cove is distinctive, with a nature preserve populated by herons, egrets, pelicans, osprey, and native flora. It also has a 125,000-gallon fish pond teeming with tarpon, rays, lobsters, crabs and tropical fish. Their picturesque beach and large tiki bar are available for parties and special events. The natural beauty of Coconut Cove has drawn numerous film and television crews.

Water recreation is available through two on-site operators: **PJ Boat Rentals** (☎ 305-664-8444), renting pontoons, offshore and back-country boats, skiffs, Hobie Cats and other craft; and **Extreme Sports Florida Keys** (☎ 305-664-4055), offering an ultralight/flying boat training flight over surrounding waters. Or you can take a fishing charter and depart from the resort's own marina. Within walking distance are a host of activities, including shopping, restaurants, live entertainment and attractions.

Accommodations are in cottages equipped with full kitchens, cable TV, free coffee and local phone calls. Guests are also entitled to free kayak rentals.

TROPICAL REEF RESORT AND MARINA
MM 84.9 (O)
☎ 305-664-8881 or 800-887-3373
Inexpensive-Moderate

Stretch out on a white-sand beach dotted with chickee huts and lounge chairs, or take a dip in one of two pools, surrounded by the relaxing atmosphere of Tropical Reef Resort and Marina. Recreation options include basketball, shuffleboard and kayak

rentals, and there are outdoor cooking areas. The independently operated Rainbow Reef dive center, (☎ 800-457-4354), has two dive boats and offers rental equipment and instruction. There is a separate kiddie pool and children's playground. Private dockage also available.

Accommodations range from standard motel rooms to efficiencies, apartments and villas. All villas have kitchens, furnished with basic equipment.

PELICAN COVE RESORT
MM. 84.5 (O)
☎ 305-664-4435 or 800-445-4690
www.pcove.com
Moderate-Expensive

Next door to the popular attraction Theater of the Sea, Pelican Cove fronts a lovely private beach and boasts a wealth of activities. Personal watercraft, boats, kayaks, and snorkel and fishing gear can be rented at the watersports center. Also on-site is **Ultimate Fishing Charters** (☎ 305-852-4969), departing from Pelican Cove's dock for half- and full-day fishing adventures.

A sparkling swimming pool with poolside bar and café, an oceanside Jacuzzi, tennis, and volleyball also add to the fun. Planning a gathering? The resort's dockside meeting area can accommodate groups of up to 30, with catering and bar service available. Weddings are another specialty, with arrangements including a notary ceremony, bottle of champagne and a wedding cake for two. Honeymoon packages are also available.

Pelican Cove offers a choice of room styles, including standard hotel rooms with cocktail refrigerators and coffee makers; studio efficiencies with fully equipped kitchens; two- and three-bedroom suites; and

deluxe one-bedroom Jacuzzi suites. All have private oceanfront balconies. Complimentary continental breakfast is included with the room rate.

HOLIDAY ISLE BEACH RESORTS & MARINA
MM 84 (O)
☎ 305-664-2321 or 800-327-7070
www.theisle.com
Moderate

A party atmosphere prevails at Holiday Isle, a sandy, laid-back jumble of hotels, restaurants, island-style outdoor bars and souvenir stands – the kind of place where people stroll around barefoot in bathing suits, exotic drinks in hand.

What to do first? Deep-sea fishing charter boats and party boats depart from Holiday Isle's marina, while experienced back-country guides are on hand to show visitors the secrets of back-country angling. Hobie Cat, sailboard and ocean kayak rentals are available on-site, as are pontoon boats, skiffs and personal watercraft. A specially-designed boat takes the fearless on parasailing flights.

The full-service Holiday Isle Dive Center offers equipment, a 35-foot dive boat that makes two trips daily (private charters also available), and a variety of PADI instruction courses. Snorkel lessons are complimentary on snorkel trips.

If you'd rather relax and soak up the sunshine, there's a sandy beach with plenty of lounge chairs and two pools, one with a pool bar. Restaurants run the gamut from fast food to gourmet, and include a steakhouse and an oceanside raw bar. And don't forget to sample a rumrunner at the Tiki Bar, which touts itself as the home of the famous frozen drink.

Among the special events held at Holiday Isle are bikini contests, bartending competitions and music festivals. Call for schedule information.

Three properties – El Capitan, Howard Johnson and Harbor Lights – provide a range of accommodations, including oceanfront efficiencies and standard hotel rooms. Luxury suites are also available.

CHEECA LODGE
MM 82 (O)
☎ 305-664-4651 or 800-327-2888
www.cheeca.com
Expensive-Deluxe

Former President George Bush visits Cheeca Lodge every year for the George Bush/Cheeca Lodge Bonefish Tournament.

Once you arrive, you may not venture forth until it's time to go home. This 27-acre, oceanfront resort has it all – activities for all ages and interests, award-winning dining, and oversized guest rooms that will prompt a sigh of satisfaction the moment you enter.

Practice your serve on one of six lighted tennis courts or tee off on a nine-hole, par three golf course. A 50-foot lap pool and second free-form pool invite swimming and sunbathing or you can take a dip in the resort's saltwater swimming lagoon. Private swimming instruction is offered, along with water aerobics classes.

Caribbean Watersports (☎ 305-664-9598 or 888-SEA-REEF (732-7333); www.caribbeanwatersports.com), the resort's dive center, offers private dive charters and free snorkeling lessons along with open-water certification and resort diving courses. See page 321 for more information. The 42-foot catamaran, *Cheeca View*, can take up to 50 on dive trips. The center also offers watersports rentals and "Enviro-Tours" to nearby Indian Key and Lignumvitae Key. For anglers, Cheeca's concierge desk can arrange a deep-sea, reef or backcountry fishing charter. Don't worry if you overdo the fun – a massage therapist will give you a therapeutic, hour-long massage right in your room.

For kids, the resort's **Camp Cheeca** is a marine science and environmental awareness program for children ages six-12. If business must come before pleasure during your visit, Cheeca offers 4,200 square feet of meeting space and state-of-the-art conference equipment.

Diners have a choice of three different restaurants, including the four-diamond **Atlantic's Edge**, specializing in fresh seafood, fine steaks and innovative appetizers. It's open for dinner and Sunday brunch. There is also a casual, indoor/outdoor serving three meals daily, and an oceanfront bar offering light fare nightly.

Cheeca Lodge has 203 guestrooms and suites housed in a main lodge, and low-rise villas clustered throughout the grounds. Ocean, garden and golf course views are available, and some rooms have private balconies. Amenities include color television with video player, AM/FM radio and CD player, direct dial telephone with voice mail and dataports, coffee makers, mini-bar, separate tables for work and play, full length mirrors, deluxe bathroom amenities, hair dryer and double sinks.

CHESAPEAKE RESORT
MM 83.5 (O)
☎ 305-664-4662 or 800-338-3395
www.florida-keys.fl.us/chesapea.htm
Moderate-Expensive

Chesapeake's beach area is movie-set pretty, with 700 feet of white sand dotted by palms and chickee huts wrapped around a saltwater lagoon. The great outdoors can also be savored in the Jacuzzi and two pools, on the tennis court, or swaying in a beachfront hammock. Watersports, a dive boat and backcountry fishing boat are on the premises, along with

a boat ramp and gym. Restaurants, lounges and entertainment are within walking distance.

Accommodations include oceanfront guestrooms and suites, garden view motel units with screened porches overlooking the tennis court, and villas with fully equipped kitchens ranging from single-room efficiencies to one- and two-bedroom units.

KON TIKI RESORT
MM 81.2 (B)
☎ 305-664-4702
www.thefloridakeys.com/kontiki
Moderate

Its name conjures up images of the South Pacific, and Kon Tiki Resort resembles a tropical haven with its lush landscaping and waterfront setting. Tucked into a private lagoon is a charming beach area, while a heated swimming pool is steps away. Or guests can take a dip in a private grotto stocked with game fish, tarpon and tropical fish. A boat ramp with deep-water dockage is also on hand for those who sail in. Also, throughout the grounds, there are shady spots to lounge and picnic.

Guests have a choice of standard motel rooms or complete efficiencies, all with cable TV. Efficiency and villa units also feature separate living rooms and kitchens; some also offer screened porches and sundecks.

LA SIESTA RESORT
MM 80.5 (O)
☎ 305-664-2132 or 800-222-1693
www.florida-keys.fl.us/lasiesta.htm
Inexpensive-Moderate

Seven acres of palms and sand provide a laid-back setting for fun in the sun at family-operated La Si-

esta Resort. Watersports rentals include personal watercraft, paddleboats and ultralights, while landlubbers can take off on rented bicycles. Fishing charters depart from the resort's full-service marina, which also features a lighted pier for night fishing, and a boat launch ramp and trailer storage for guests. And you can cook what you catch on one of the resort's outdoor barbecue grills. Back-country fishing charters, as well as scuba and snorkel charters, can also be arranged.

If you just want to hang around the resort, there's a large pool with slide, volleyball, basketball and shuffleboard, plus a children's playground.

Accommodations include one- and two-bedroom apartments, and one- , two- , and three-bedroom villas, all with fully equipped kitchens and color TV.

HAMPTON INN & SUITES
MM 80 (O)
☎ 305-664-0073 or 800-426-7866
www.hamptoninn-suites.com
Moderate-Expensive

Kick off your shoes and soak in the casual spirit of this beachfront resort, where you'll find a host of relaxing options, from stretching out by a pool that overlooks the ocean, to soaking in a whirlpool tub, or strolling a private beach where lounge chairs await. If your idea of relaxing is keeping busy, on-site dive professionals can arrange a snorkel or scuba excursion or you can rent a personal watercraft and take to the seas on your own. The inn's exercise room includes weight training equipment and treadmill.

Hampton Inn has an Outback Steakhouse, which also features a tiki bar.

Rooms are decorated in tropical pastels and include standard guest rooms and suites that include a living room, separate bedroom, fully equipped kitchen and dining area. All guests enjoy complimentary

continental breakfast, cable TV with premium movie channel, free local phone calls and long distance access, dataports in every room and laundry facilities.

BREEZY PALMS RESORT
MM 80 (O)
☎ 305-664-2361
www.breezypalms.com
Inexpensive-Moderate

True to its name, dozens of palms swaying in the breeze are an outstanding feature of this casual, family-owned and -operated resort. Fronting the ocean are a sandy, oceanfront lounging area, a sheltered harbor, spacious dock and boat ramp. Volleyball and shuffleboard are located on-site, with tennis, golf and bowling nearby. Charter fishing and dive operations are not far away.

The resort offers standard motel rooms and efficiencies, as well as one- and two-bedroom apartments, bungalows and a beach cottage, all with cable TV and most with kitchenettes or full kitchens.

WHITE GATE COURT
MM 76 (B)
☎ 305-664-4136 or 800-645-GATE
www.whitegatecourt.com
Moderate

White Gate Court features cottage accommodations.

If privacy is a priority, this is the place. Set off the main road, a cluster of cottages leads the way to a 200-foot private beach and private dock. Lounge chairs and picnic tables are scattered around the beach; use of the paddleboat, snorkeling gear and bicycles is complimentary.

There are seven units in five cottages, including studios, suites and villas for two to five people, all with

full kitchens, cable TV and a gas grill on every porch. An on-site coin laundry is open 24 hours a day. The commercial center of Islamorada, with its restaurants, supermarkets, shops and watersports rentals, is just two miles away. Pets are welcome.

CORAL BAY RESORT
MM 75.5 (B)
☎ 305-664-5568
www.thecoralbayresort.com
Inexpensive-Moderate

Billing itself as "the Keys they way they used to be," Coral Bay Resort maintains an informal, unhurried pace, encouraging guests to relax by the pool or on the beach. They encourage guests to ask questions on island history; the managers are well versed in local lore.

Fishing enthusiasts can cast for snapper and grouper from the resort's dock or be picked up there by local guides for deep-sea adventures. The marina and boat ramp are offered free to guests. After a spectacular sunset over the bay, the waters beyond the dock are illuminated to keep that glow going.

Guests stay in efficiencies with full kitchens, housed in cottages that are styled after historic Keys homes.

CALOOSA COVE
MM 73.8 (O)
☎ 305-664-8811 or 888-297-3208
Moderate

Sprawled across 10 secluded acres on the southern tip of Lower Matecumbe Key, Caloosa Cove is home to 30 fully furnished, oceanfront condominiums, ranging from efficiencies to two-bath suites. Nightly rentals are accepted during the week, with a two-night minimum on weekends and holidays.

Weekly and long-term rates are also available at Caloosa Cove.

Recreation opportunities include a heated swimming pool, shuffleboard and barbecue area, two lighted tennis courts, a basketball court and a 40-slip, full-service marina. Boat, fishing, snorkeling and bicycle rentals may also be arranged. Guests can savor a tropical cocktail in the Safari Lounge or dine at the restaurant overlooking the marina.

Specialty Rentals

PARADISE CONNECTIONS
MM 88 (B)
☎ 305-852-2405

Two-bedroom/two-bath bayview condo units range $750-$850 per week.

AMERICAN CARIBBEAN RENTALS
MM 81.5 (O)
☎ 305-664-5152
www.americancaribbean.com

Representing every rental possibility from cottages and lofts to three- and four-bedroom pool homes. Weekly rates range from $850 to $2,500.

Campgrounds

FIESTA KEY RESORT KOA
MM 70 (B)
☎ 305-664-4922 or 800-562-7730
Campground-Inexpensive
On-site Motel-Moderate

This 28-acre resort boasts a complete marina and dock with boat and slip rentals, an Olympic-sized swimming pool, two hot tubs, a waterfront pub and grill, horseshoe courts, game room and playground. Recreation options also include saltwater fishing, diving, snorkeling, and bicycle rentals. Visitors stay

well-stocked and comfortable with a complete convenience store, hot showers, laundry facilities and clean restrooms.

The campground features full RV hook-up and tent sites, with luxury waterfront sites and tent village sites also available. Another option are the 20 motel/efficiency units, some with kitchens. Pets are welcome, but must be leashed.

Middle Keys

Resorts & Hotels

HAWK'S CAY RESORT
MM 61 (O)
☎ 888-443-6393
www.hawkscay.com
Expensive-Deluxe

A self-contained recreation oasis just a few miles north of Marathon, Hawk's Cay is enormous by Keys standards, spread across 60 acres and offering an impressive array of activities on land and sea. Fishing enthusiasts can enjoy offshore, back-country, reef and flats excursions, kayak fishing or discover the art of fly-fishing in an instruction program offered one weekend each month. A new dive center offers equipment rentals, instruction and certification, and dive charters.

A full-service marina features a variety of watersports and powerboat rentals, or guests can sail the high seas with the expert guidance of certified instructors in an offshore sailing school. Parasailing, kayak excursions and scuba training are also available, while those who prefer a more sedate activity

can take a glass-bottom boat tour or champagne sunset cruise aboard a catamaran.

Additional recreational amenities at Hawk's Cay include a private saltwater lagoon, adult and family swimming pools, children's program for ages three-12, dining at four restaurants, room service, shopping, bicycling and tennis. The resort is nearing completion of a $50 million renovation that added 240 villas and the newly opened **Indies Club** recreation and fitness center, featuring an interactive pirate ship for kids with water cannons, along with a putting green, sauna, steam room and exercise room. In addition, a new 15,000-sq.-ft. conference center is slated to open in 2001, adding to the resort's existing 10,000 square feet of meeting space.

DOLPHIN ENCOUNTERS

Hawk's Cay has its own dolphin encounter program, the **Dolphin Connection**, which allows guests to interact with these intelligent creatures, giving basic commands and being rewarded with a salty kiss. The program also includes a short seminar on marine mammal physiology, and all participants receive a souvenir photo. Besides the interactive program, Dolphin Connection offers a behind-the-scenes look at dolphin training as well as a special, supervised hands-on experience for children. For rates and reservations, contact Hawk's Cay, ☎ 888-443-6393.

Accommodations include 160 guest rooms, 16 suites and 240 new two-bedroom villas. Designed with a distinctive, tropical Florida feel, the villas feature full kitchens, washer/dryers, living rooms and spa-

cious porches. All are two-story and sleep up to six. Here's a nice perk: grocery delivery service right to your villa door. For villa guests who stay four nights or more, housekeeping is provided during the middle of the stay (at no additional cost). Daily housekeeping services are available for a nominal fee.

Hawk's Cay also offers inclusive romance and family packages.

RAINBOW BEND RESORT
MM 58 (O)
☎ 305-289-1505 or 800-929-1505
www.rainbowbend.com
Moderate

A romantic spot for couples, or a refreshing change for families, the mellow charms of Rainbow Bend Resort have wide appeal, from sunning and swimming to active watersports and fine dining.

The resort caters to anglers with a complete bait and tackle shop and lighted dock for night fishing. Any charters you arrange can pick up at the dock as well. For more fun on the waves, guests may enjoy the use of the resort's Boston Whaler motorboats and are charged only for the fuel used. Also complimentary are sailboats, pedalboats, paddleboats, kayak ecotours and canoes; all are available for up to four hours each day.

A large oceanfront pool area includes an outdoor spa; steps away is a private beach with lounge chairs and chickee huts. You can also travel by motorboat to nearby choice swimming and snorkeling spots. The resort supplies rental masks, fins and snorkels. Other dive supplies are available locally. The resort's glass-bottom boat reveals undersea wonders while it ferries divers and snorkelers to prime dive

Rainbow Bend is situated on Grassy Key, known for its great grass flats fishing.

sites. Maximum capacity is six, so call to reserve a spot (☎ 305-289-9933).

For on-site dining, casual **Hideaway Café** serves three meals daily with sweeping views of the ocean to accompany your meal. Accommodations include a variety of efficiencies and one-bedroom suites, all with full kitchens. Two-bedroom oceanfront suites are available at a slightly higher rate. Rooms include complimentary American breakfast.

BONEFISH RESORT
MM 58 (O)
☎ 305-743-7101
www.bonefishresort.com
Inexpensive

The tropical designs on entrance doors at Bonefish Resort were painted by local artists.

Within a setting of palms, banana trees, hibiscus and tropical gardens is the sandy solitude of family-owned and operated Bonefish Resort. Sunseekers are in luck. There's a beach area complete with a large sundeck that includes an old-fashioned swing. Swimmers, take note – the water is quite shallow; to reach a swimming depth of about four feet, you have to walk out at least 150 feet. Right off the beach is a floating dock, where complimentary rowboats, paddleboats and canoes are docked.

Guests of Bonefish Resort also have privileges at the **Cabana Club**, a private beach club four miles away. In addition to a lovely beach, the club offers an extra large pool, changing rooms and showers. Also nearby are fishing, diving and boat rentals; check with Bonefish management for details.

Accommodations include rooms with double beds or double/single combos, as well as double and single queen rooms. Some have full kitchens and all have cable TV, refrigerator and coffee maker. Available at

a higher rate are one-bedroom oceanfront suites with private decks, living rooms and full kitchens.

COCOPLUM BEACH & TENNIS CLUB
MM 54.5 (O)
☎ 305-743-0240 or 800-228-1587
www.cocoplum.com
Moderate-Deluxe

Want more room in your hotel room? Cocoplum Beach & Tennis Club is home to 20 free-standing, three-story vacation villas, each with two bedrooms and two baths. All feature a fully equipped kitchen and dining area, family room with full-size sofa bed, wet bar, cable TV with VCR, wrap-around porch and private laundry room. Master suites have queen-size beds while second bedrooms have either bunk or twin beds.

Three-story vacation villas give you plenty of space at Cocoplum.

Amenities include a large oceanview pool, an expansive beach complete with cabanas, tennis court, hot tub and barbecue pits. Personal watercraft and small sailboats launch directly from the beach, or guests can arrange charters for fishing, reef trips, diving and snorkeling. Restaurants and shopping are nearby. Weekly discounts are available during certain periods for stays of seven consecutive nights or longer.

CONTINENTAL INN
MM 53.5 (O)
Key Colony Beach, FL 33051
☎ 305-289-0101 or 800-443-7352
www.thefloridakeys.com/continentalinn
Moderate

Efficiency suites surround a pool and patio area at this casual resort, which also boasts a lovely white-sand beach offering oceanside picnic tables and gas-

The Continental Inn is within walking distance of the Key Colony Beach golf course.

fired barbecue grills. Rental boats, dockage, charter and party boats are conveniently close.

Efficiencies include full kitchens, dinettes, living rooms, cable TV, and sleeping areas with your choice of two double or queen beds, or one king bed. The hotel also offers two two-bedroom suites.

CORAL LAGOON
MM 53.5 (O)
☎ 305-289-0121
Inexpensive-Moderate

Located five minutes from the Marathon airport on a deep-water canal with boat dockage and ocean access, Coral Lagoon boasts an informal ambience with relaxing extras like a private sundeck with gazebo and hammock outside each room. Start the day with a game of tennis followed by a dip in the pool. If fishing is on the agenda, the use of rods and reels is complimentary, with outdoor barbecue grills ready to sear your prize catch. An on-site dive shop provides complete services for divers and snorkelers.

Tucked among lush landscape that offers added privacy are duplex cottages housing 18 efficiencies, featuring living and sleeping areas, kitchens and cable TVs with VCRs.

SEASCAPE
MM 52 (O)
☎ 305-743-6455
Moderate

Seascape is a secluded Keys retreat of only nine rooms, with a maximum of two people per room. The serene atmosphere is enhanced by a walled garden and tropical plantings throughout the resort's five landscaped acres.

Days start with complimentary muffins, fruit and coffee served in the lobby, and complimentary wine and hors d'oeuvres are offered at sunset. Guests spend tranquil days beside a lovely oceanview pool or relaxing on a picturesque beach. If you're boating in, there is a small marina.

Seascape was once a private estate and is located in a quiet, residential section of Marathon.

No two rooms are alike at Seascape, but all are decorated in an airy, Keys style. Most are on the ground floor of the main house while others are located in a one-story wing. Some rooms have full kitchens. All of Seascape's rooms are non-smoking.

SOMBRERO RESORT & LIGHTHOUSE MARINA
MM 50 (O)
☎ 305-743-2250 or 800-433-8660
www.fl-web.com/sombrero
Moderate

A 54-slip marina is the base for a variety of water-related activities at Sombrero Resort, including reef snorkeling, kayaking, fishing charters and sunset cruises. The resort's full-service dive center is Sombrero Reef Explorers (☎ 305-743-0536). Among the amenities are a junior Olympic-size pool, four lighted tennis courts, a small fitness center and sauna. A poolside tiki bar serves frozen tropical drinks, while an on-site steakhouse serves dinner nightly except Sundays. One-bedroom condo-style units include full kitchens; two-bedroom efficiency units have kitchenettes.

BANANA BAY RESORT & MARINA
MM 49.5 (B)
☎ 305-743-3500 or 800-BANANA-1
www.bananabay.com
Moderate

Banana Bay Sailing School (☎ 305-289-1433) offers a six-day basic sailing course package for ages eight and up, customized to each participant's abilities.

Located on 10 tropically landscaped acres, Banana Bay has all the recreational amenities to keep you busy, yet maintains an intimate atmosphere to keep you relaxed. A generous pool and pool deck, outdoor whirlpool, private sunning beach and snorkel area are complemented by two tennis courts, fitness gym, a volleyball court and a 50-slip marina.

Watersports abound, including charter fishing with **Jerry's Charter Service** (☎ 305-289-7298), located on-site. Rentals include boats and WaveRunners, snorkel equipment, sea kayaks, windsurfing boards and sailing dinghies. A full-service dive shop is nearby. If you'd rather let someone else do the "driving," a 38-foot sailboat is available for swim and snorkel trips as well as sunset champagne cruises.

Other amenities include 60 deluxe guestrooms, a restaurant, poolside lounge, conference rooms, waterfront tiki bar, and a garden wedding gazebo. Romance and wedding packages are available.

BLACKFIN RESORT
MM 49.5 (B)
☎ 305-743-2393 or 800-548-KEYS
www.blackfinresort.com
Inexpensive-Moderate

If watersports are your pleasure, Blackfin obliges with a daily dive trips departing from their marina, and rentals that include single or double personal watercraft, boats and sea kayaks. The staff can assist you in arranging deep-sea or back-country fishing charters.

Other on-site recreation includes a pool overlooking a sandy volleyball court and the marina, and a man-made beach with barbecue and picnic facilities. A ladder provides access from the beach to the water. The resort's restaurant serves local seafood, lobster and stone crab, while the lounge features sports events on a big-screen TV.

Accommodations range from standard single rooms to two-bedroom apartments that accommodate up to 10. Amenities include in-room coffee, direct dial phones with dataports and voice mail, cable TV and refrigerators.

BUCCANEER RESORT
MM 48.5 (B)
☎ 305-743-9071 or 800-237-3329
www.floridakey.com/buccaneer.html
Inexpensive-Expensive

Recreation or rest – it's your choice at Buccaneer Resort, where a sandy beach and snorkel area offers windsurfing, sailboat, personal watercraft and small powerboat rentals. Boat rentals are also available through on-site **Bud Boats** (☎ 800-633-2283), along with charter fishing excursions. A full bait and tackle shop is located at the resort, and dive operations are nearby.

Recreational amenities at Buccaneer also include tennis, volleyball, badminton, basketball, shuffleboard, horseshoes, a swimming pool, sundeck and cookout area. Among the services offered are boat dockage, a boat ramp, trailer parking and a coin laundry. A bayside café and raw bar serves local favorites and tropical drinks for lunch and dinner.

Buccaneer features a number of cottage styles, from economy to beachfront, all with color TV and front patios. Beachfront cottages also offer HBO, micro-

wave ovens and small refrigerators. Other options include one- and two-bedroom villas with two baths (one with Jacuzzi) and full kitchens, living/dining rooms and cable TV with HBO; and one- and two-bedroom waterfront suites with a living/dining/kitchenette combo.

FARO BLANCO MARINE RESORT

MM 48.5 (O)
☎ 305-743-9018 or 800-759-3276
Inexpensive-Expensive

In Faro Blanco's working lighthouse are two separate apartments, available on a nightly basis, that sleep four or five people each.

Unique accommodations distinguish Faro Blanco, where guests stay in rustic, one-room cottages, floating houseboat staterooms, and even a lighthouse, which, while not luxurious, does offer such amenities as cable TV and kitchen facilities – not to mention a 360° view.

Luxury condos feature three bedrooms (or two bedrooms and a den), two full baths, full kitchen with washer and dryer, living room, dining room and balcony. Each unit can sleep up to six people. Linens and daily housekeeping are provided; there is a three-night minimum stay.

Amenities include an Olympic-size pool and a full-service dive center. The staff can help you arrange a fishing charter that departs from the resort's full-service marina. A restaurant and a lounge are also on the property.

Specialty Rentals

KEY COLONY BEACH REALTY
MM 53.5 (O)
Marathon
☎ 305-743-6226 or 800-766-5033
www.keysproperties.com

Offering one- to four-bedroom vacation homes, most with dockage and beach/pool access. Weekly rates range from $675 to $2,000.

Campgrounds

THE JOLLY ROGER TRAVEL PARK & MOTEL
MM 59 (B)
☎ 305-289-0404 or 800-995-1525
Inexpensive

A bayside haven for those who bring their "home" with them, offering full RV hookups and tent sites on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Limited hookup sites for vans are available daily or weekly. Guests enjoy a swim and snorkel area, organized activities, a boat dock and ramp, and cable TV. Amenities include showers and restrooms, laundry, phone connections, a dog-walk area and on-site motel. Seasonal and long-term mobile home and RV sites are also available.

Lower Keys

Resorts & Hotels

DEER RUN BED & BREAKFAST
MM 33 (O)
Big Pine Key
☎ 305-872-2015
Moderate

Deer Run caters to adults; children under 10 are not permitted.

Stay in an authentic Florida Cracker-style home on the ocean, furnished with antiques, wicker and rattan. Upstairs rooms have high ceilings, Bahama fans and French doors. There are six guestrooms, each with private bath and, except for one, ocean views. A full breakfast is served on an expansive veranda overlooking the ocean.

Bahia Honda State Park is five minutes away. Key West is just 30 miles away.

BIG PINE MOTEL
MM 30.5 (B)
Big Pine Key
☎ 305-872-9090
www.bigpinekeymotel.com
Inexpensive

Located 11 miles west of the Seven Mile Bridge, and 30 miles from the heart of Key West, Big Pine Motel provides a relaxing atmosphere at a value price for your Lower Keys adventures. Fishing and dive charters are arranged by request. The motel offers 32 rooms, including efficiencies and apartments, all with cable TV. Other amenities include a swimming pool and a restaurant, **Maria's Cantina**, serving authentic Mexican specialties (☎ 305-872-5541).

LITTLE PALM ISLAND RESORT & SPA
MM 28.5 (O)
Little Torch Key
☎ 305-872-2524 or 800-3-GET-LOST
www.littlepalmisland.com
Deluxe

Little Palm Island welcomes guests ages 16 and older.

Spectacular indulgence awaits in a true island getaway. Accessible only by launch ride from its shore station on Little Torch Key, the award-winning Little Palm Island Resort occupies a five-acre island at the western end of the Newfound Harbor Keys.

But you may feel it's your own personal island, especially when making your way through lush tropical foliage and flowers toward the thatched-roof bungalow that houses your one-bedroom suite. Designed with seclusion in mind, each oceanfront suite features a private veranda, king-size bed, separate living room, Jacuzzi whirlpool bath, and an outdoor shower, fenced with bamboo for total privacy. Amenities are plentiful, including a fully stocked minibar and coffee maker, but don't expect to find a phone, TV or alarm clock. They're serious about escaping from the everyday world! But if you must keep in touch, there is an in-room datalink and complimentary daily newspaper.

Little Palm Island was once a fishing camp and island retreat for Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy and Nixon.

In addition to the bungalow suites, there are two grand suites boasting more than 900 square feet of space and appointed with slate floors, his-and-her bathrooms, four-poster bed, indoor hot tub and indoor/outdoor lounging areas. All suites are decorated in classic British Colonial style with Caribbean accents.

If you can bear to leave your room, resort recreation is extensive. Feel like being pampered? The **Island Spa** offers a range of massages, body treatments, In-

donesian therapies and facials, as well as a number of salon services.

On the active side, a PADI dive facility offers various certification courses along with a number of snorkel and reef and wreck dive excursions. Full- and half-day deep-sea or back-country fishing charters are available, while sunset or moonlight sails and sailing charters to Key West are provided by the 42-foot yacht *First Lady*. Guests may also rent angler boats, deck boats and Sun Kats, or explore the backcountry of Great Heron National Wildlife Refuge on an eco-tour.

Complimentary to guests are such non-motorized watersports as surfbikes, kayaks, canoes, windsurfers and Hobie day sailers, as well as snorkel and fishing gear, beach lounges, towels and floats. Also complimentary are the fitness center and life-size chess set. Relaxing by the lagoon-style pool or escaping to the white-sand beach are other alternatives.

Another award-winning facet of Little Palm Island is its restaurant, famed for its fusion of "Floribbean" cuisine with Asian and French influences. Serving three meals daily, the restaurant also features a spectacular Sunday brunch and Thursday Gourmet Night. Guests may dine à la carte or select a meal plan. Inclusive packages and wedding packages are also available.

DOLPHIN RESORT & MARINA
MM 28.5 (O)
Little Torch Key
☎ 305-872-2685 or 800-553-0308
www.dolphinresort.com
Inexpensive-Expensive

This relaxing retreat maintains a fleet of rental boats for diving and snorkeling excursions to nearby

Looe Key National Marine Sanctuary. The 18- to 22-foot Anglers are also ideal for fishing excursions. The resort can also arrange fishing charters with a number of local guides. An on-site marina store lets you stock up on live and frozen bait, cold beverages and snacks.

With the exception of one standard hotel room, Dolphin Resort offers one- and two-bedroom apartment suites in two buildings – Hibiscus and Dolphin – some with full kitchens and screened porches. One-bedroom cottages with queen beds and kitchens are another option.

PARMER'S RESORT
MM 28.5 (B)
Little Torch Key
☎ 305-872-2157
www.parmersplace.com
Inexpensive-Moderate

One-bedroom suites, efficiencies and rooms at charming Parmer's Resort have names like Orchid, Snapper, Heron and Grunt, each decorated differently and offering a homey, relaxing atmosphere. All feature private porches and cable TV, and many have full kitchens. Complimentary continental breakfast is included with the rate.

Located on five acres that are also home to a number of rare birds, the waterfront resort features a lovely pool area, surrounded by lush foliage, three boat basins and dockage. Weekly rates are available.

LOOE KEY REEF RESORT & DIVE CENTER
MM 27.5 (O)
Ramrod Key
☎ 305-872-2215 or 800-942-5397
www.diveflakeys.com
Inexpensive-Moderate

Looe Key Reef offers instruction and excursions aboard their 45-foot catamaran, which departs daily at 10 am, bound for the Looe Key National Marine Sanctuary.

This is a no-nonsense resort for divers. A five-star PADI dive center offers instruction for all levels, with group discounts and packages available. Resort guests receive two tanks and weight belts at no charge, while masks, snorkels and fins are complimentary to snorkelers.

After a day below the waves, you can relax in the resort's poolside restaurant. In addition to a menu and daily specials, they'll cook your catch for you. Or check out the open-air tiki bar for libations and live entertainment.

Rooms are basic, with two double beds, TV, and front and rear entrances.

Specialty Rentals

BIG PINE VACATION RENTALS
MM 29.5 (B), Big Pine Key
☎ 305-872-9863 or 800-654-9560.

Featuring two- and three-bedroom canal or waterfront homes, available on a monthly basis only, with rates from $2,400 to $3,000.

Campgrounds

SUNSHINE KEY
MM 39 (B)
Big Pine Key
☎ 305-872-2217 or 800-852-0348
Inexpensive

Sprawling across 75 acres, Sunshine Key has 400 sites with full hook-ups available. Recreational amenities are plentiful and include a large pool, swimming beach, tennis and basketball courts, shuffleboard, an outdoor theater, adult and teen recreation halls, and a children's playground. Complete facilities include boat dockage, restaurant, gift shop, grocery, service station, laundromat, hot showers and dog kennel.

Also available, at moderate rates, are one- , two- , and three bedroom RV units, completely furnished, some with waterfront locations.

SUGARLOAF KEY RESORT
MM 20 (O)
Summerland Key
☎ 305-745-3549 or 800-562-7731
Inexpensive

This KOA Kampground is just 20 miles north of Key West, with plenty of features for your comfort and enjoyment, including a private beach, marina with boat rentals, freshwater pool, hot tub, mini golf, watersports rentals, a complete food and sundries store and a waterfront pub and grill. Other services include modem dataports at no charge, and cable TV, available for a fee.

The campground offers shaded, landscaped RV and tent sites, laundry facilities, hot showers and restrooms. New RV efficiency rentals are also available.

Key West

Resorts & Hotels

OCEAN KEY – A NOBLE HOUSE RESORT
Old Town
Zero Duval Street
☎ 305-296-7701 or 800-328-9815
www.oceankey.com
Expensive-Deluxe

Ocean Key Resort is ground zero on Duval Street.

The resort is home to the famed Sunset Pier, where visitors can watch the sun slip below the horizon while enjoying island cuisine, burgers and grilled specialties at the **Sunset Pier Bar & Grille**, overlooking Mallory Square and the Gulf of Mexico. Breakfast is also served on the Pier.

When you're not exploring Old Town, there's a marina offering fishing charters and watersports rentals, a Gulf-side pool and, if you run out of ideas, a guest activities manager. Be sure to stop by Ocean Key Traders in the hotel lobby, featuring an eclectic selection of gift items and collectibles.

All rooms at Ocean Key feature Jacuzzi tubs, private balconies and queen-size sofabeds. You can choose between rooms with queen-size beds and deluxe rooms with king-size beds. Ocean Key also offers junior suites featuring separate living rooms; one-bedroom suites, some with full kitchens; and two bedroom suites, all with full kitchens. Honeymoon, fishing, and seasonal packages are available. An event

staff can coordinate weddings and meetings for up to 50 people.

TIP

Since Key West is just a two-by-four-mile island, you'll be close to the action no matter where you stay. But if a property is located in the Old Town hub of restaurants, bars and shops, that designation follows its name.

PIER HOUSE RESORT AND CARIBBEAN SPA
Old Town
One Duval Street
☎ 305-296-4600 or 800-327-8340
www.pierhouse.com
Expensive-Deluxe

You'd never know you were steps away from bustling Duval Street at Pier House, whose tropical foliage, sparkling pool and private beach create a secluded sanctuary when you're ready to escape the activity of the Southernmost City. To pamper those sore muscles after a day of sightseeing, the Caribbean Spa soothes and rejuvenates the body with a variety of massages, including the "Caribbean Coma," offered at the spa or in-room. Other treatments include reflexology, mud wraps, facials, full salon services and more. Spa facilities also include an exercise circuit, free weights, Stairmasters, treadmills, Lifecycles, sauna, steam and whirlpool. Choose a spa package or go à la carte.

The resort's 126 guestrooms and 16 suites, richly furnished, offer pool or garden views and range from

Pier House Resort caters to meetings with a 3,000-square-foot conference center, accommodating up to 175.

standard rooms with balconies to courtyard rooms overlooking the pool area. Caribbean Spa rooms feature hardwood floors, CD player, VCR and a whirlpool bath; harbor-front rooms overlook the Gulf of Mexico.

If you're dining in, Pier House has a number of options, including the four-diamond **Pier House Restaurant**, serving American and Caribbean specialties with a water view. Fresh seafood and island fare are available at the **Harbour View Café**, while the **Pier House Market Bistro** offers imported cheeses and pâté, special coffees and pastries in a setting overlooking Old Town. You can also relax in one of three bars, including **Havana Docks**, where patrons enjoy live music and a raw bar while viewing spectacular sunsets.

HILTON KEY WEST RESORT & MARINA
Old Town
245 Front Street
☎ 305-294-4000
www.hilton.com
Expensive-Deluxe

Reflecting the romantic Victorian architecture that typifies so many buildings in Key West, the Hilton fronts a 36-slip marina, and is within walking distance of Old Town attractions, galleries and shops. A footbridge across a bit of the Gulf waters connects the hotel to Mallory Square, famed for its nightly sunset celebrations. The hotel also hosts its own sunset festivities on Sunset Pier, right outside the front door.

Guests enjoy a fitness facility with massage therapy and spa treatments, a heated pool and Jacuzzi; watersports include JetSkiing, diving, snorkeling

and fishing. The marina also offers personal watercraft and boat rentals, parasailing, and sunset sails.

Hilton Key West guests have access to a beautiful white-sand beach, just offshore at another Hilton property, Sunset Key Guest Cottages (listed below). Sunset Key is accessible 24 hours a day via water shuttle; beach towels and lounge chairs are included in the nominal fee.

Dining is offered at the waterfront **Bistro 245**, serving three meals daily, or the **Castaways** pool bar, offering light fare and snacks.

The Hilton's 178 rooms and suites feature cable TV, coffee makers with complimentary coffee, hair dryers, iron/ironing boards, mini-bars, dataport hookups, and private balconies. Some suites also include Jacuzzi and steam bath. Additional hotel services include concierge, meeting facilities, a business center and valet or self parking.

SUNSET KEY GUEST COTTAGES
Old Town (Offshore)
245 Front Street
Key West, FL 33040
☎ 305-292-5300 or 888-477-7SUN
www.sunsetkeycottages.hilton.com
Deluxe

It's just a 10-minute water launch from the Hilton Key West Resort and Marina, but it feels like a world away on this secluded island hideaway. Set among palm trees and lush gardens are 37 cottages featuring Key West-style whitewashed furnishings and colorful Caribbean accents.

Sunset Key guests are welcome to all the amenities at the Hilton Key West Resort & Marina, including the 36-slip marina.

Each two- or three-bedroom cottage features a living room, dining area, three full baths and a fully equipped kitchen with complimentary coffee and tea.

One-bedroom cottages offer two full baths, plus the kitchen and living/dining areas. Standard amenities include cable TV, CD player, stereo system, bathrobes, an iron/ironing board, direct-dial telephones and hair dryer. A complimentary continental breakfast basket is delivered directly to your cottage porch every morning, along with a weekday newspaper. They'll even have your cottage stocked with the groceries of your choice before your arrival; shopping lists are mailed to guests along with their confirmation letters.

Recreation on Sunset Key includes two tennis courts, a white-sand beach, a zero-degree entry pool (designed to slope gently like the ocean floor), two whirlpools, massage therapy services, and a library of books, movies, CDs and board games that guests may check out during their stay. A full range of watersports, including snorkeling, fishing and pleasure craft rentals can also be arranged.

The casual **Latitudes Beach Café** serves three meals daily while **Flippers Pool Bar** offers tropical drinks and choices from the Latitudes menu. Room service is also available, or guests may opt to have their own private chef and server cook meals in their cottage. A "marketessen" stocked with gourmet foods, standard grocery items, beach necessities and gifts is open daily.

HYATT KEY WEST RESORT AND MARINA
Old Town
601 Front Street
☎ 305-296-9900 or 800-55-HYATT
www.hyatt.com
Expensive-Deluxe

Located in the heart of Old Town, the Hyatt Key West offers a respite from the busy streets outside.

Guests can pull up a lounge chair and bask beside the pool, relax in an outdoor whirlpool or on a small, private beach. Personal watercraft, parasailing, diving, snorkeling, fishing and sailing may all be arranged on-site, along with bicycle and scooter rentals. A short distance away is the 18-hole Key West Golf Club.

The resort's 120 rooms feature private balconies, cable TV, telephones with voice mail and dataports, full bath amenities, iron/ironing boards, coffee makers with complimentary coffee, and turndown service on request. Guest services include concierge, gift shop, laundry and dry cleaning, room service, valet parking, currency exchange and meeting/banquet facilities.

A full-service restaurant specializing in local and Caribbean seafood is open for three meals daily while a pool bar and grill offers light fare and refreshing frozen drinks.

HOLIDAY INN LA CONCHA
Old Town
430 Duval Street
☎ 305-296-2991
www.laconchakeywest.com
Moderate-Expensive

Built in 1925 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, La Concha hosted royalty, presidents, and legendary authors such as Ernest Hemingway and Tennessee Williams in its heyday but, by the early 1980s, only the rooftop bar was still open and the rest of the hotel was in disrepair. A massive, multi-million-dollar renovation restored it to its former glory, and the hotel re-opened in 1986.

Today, this landmark is still famous for its rooftop, which is now a wrap-around observation deck offer-

When the president of Pan American World Airways, Juan A. Trippe, first announced service between Key West and Cuba in 1927, he located the first office in La Concha.

ing spectacular views of the city and surrounding waters. Other popular features of the hotel include the outdoor spa pool and pool bar with four levels of sundecks; and **Celebrities**, a 1930s-era dining and entertainment complex serving three meals daily along with live entertainment nightly.

The hotel's 160 guestrooms and suites are decorated in period furniture from the '20s, with poster beds, lace curtains and antiques. Other hotel features include two gift shops, bicycle and scooter rentals, concierge service, and a complete meetings and catering department. It is also a stop along the Old Town Trolley route.

WYNDHAM CASA MARINA RESORT & BEACH HOUSE
1500 Reynolds Street
☎ 305-296-3535 or (800) 626-0777
www.wyndham.com
Moderate-Expensive

The Wyndham Casa Marina is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Situated on the largest private beach in Key West, only blocks from the Southernmost Point in the continental United States, the historic Wyndham Casa Marina was built in 1920 by railroad magnate Henry Flagler and became a playground for presidents, royalty and the rich and famous during the '20s and '30s.

While still retaining its former glory, the resort is completely updated with a host of amenities, including a complimentary health club with sauna and exercise equipment, massage studio and full-service salon, three outdoor pools, watersports rentals, lighted tennis courts, and an 18-hole golf course nearby. A Kid's Klub welcomes children ages five-12.

The resort offers 461 deluxe guestrooms, many with oceanfront balconies and patios. Among the

172 suites are unique two-bedroom loft oceanfront suites. All rooms feature mini-bars, cable TV and comfort amenities like hair dryers and iron/ironing boards. Diners can go ultra-casual at the **Sun Pavilion**, open for beach and poolside lunch, dinner and beverages. **Flagler's Steakhouse & Lounge** serves three meals daily along with an elaborate Sunday brunch. Menu highlights include Black Angus steak and premium seafood served indoors or on the terrace.

SHERATON SUITES KEY WEST
2001 S. Roosevelt Blvd.
☎ 305-292-9800 or 800-45-BEACH
www.sheratonkeywest.com
Moderate-Expensive

Located on the "sunrise" side of Key West at Smathers Beach, the Sheraton Suites features the colorful, whimsical look of tropical Key West, with a relaxed attitude to match. Guests can take the plunge in a large free-form pool with cascading waterfall, soak in an outdoor Jacuzzi or stretch out on the beach, which is steps away. Snorkeling, windsurfing and kayaking are also offered. Those who want to venture forth can hop on the complimentary shuttle to Old Town; free airport transportation is available as well.

Diners will appreciate the native seafood, steaks and pasta served at the **Key West Beach House**, serving three meals daily indoors or outside on the deck.

Each room is a suite at the Sheraton, featuring a separate living and bedroom, wet bar, microwave oven, in-room coffee and tea service, two entertainment centers and computer ports. Other in-room amenities include a hair dryer, iron/ironing board

and weekday newspaper. Some suites also include Jacuzzi tubs.

BEST WESTERN KEY AMBASSADOR
3755 S. Roosevelt Blvd.
☎ 305-296-3500 or 800-432-4315
www.keyambassador.com
Inexpensive-Moderate

Located on Key West's "quiet side" (the eastern end, away from Old Town), the casual Best Western Key Ambassador is nonetheless a short trolley ride away from busy Old Town, and the desk staff can arrange your pick-up. Amenities include complimentary continental breakfast, fitness course, shuffleboard, pool, sundecks and tropical gardens. Poolside lunch and cocktails can be enjoyed at the open-air Cheekie Hut. The hotel offers 100 guestrooms with private balconies, refrigerators and cable TV with free movie channels. An airport courtesy van and special packages are available.

GRAND KEY RESORT
3990 S. Roosevelt Blvd.
☎ 305-293-1818 or 888-310-1540
www.grandkeyresort.com
Moderate-Deluxe

Grand Key offers complimentary shuttle to Old Town and the airport.

Minutes from Key West International Airport, the newly opened Grand Key Resort is adjacent to the Key West Salt Ponds ecosystem, a habitat for indigenous flora, marine life and migratory fowl. Accordingly, recreation at Grand Key reflects an emphasis on nature discovery, with inclusive packages featuring kayaking eco-tours, day trips to the Dry Tortugas and Fort Jefferson, and dive excursions. Packages also include an Island Passport, a shopping pass and vacation keepsake that grants admission

to a number of Key West attractions and sightseeing shuttles.

Amenities at the 216-room resort include a spectacular swimming pool and an exercise room with state-of-the-art fitness machines. The **Palm Haven** restaurant serves tropically inspired dishes for breakfast, lunch and dinner; the **Sanctuary Lounge** serves specialty martinis and an assortment of culinary delights from 4 pm to midnight; and the poolside **Gumbo Limbo Bar** specializes in frozen tropical drinks and light fare. Room service is also available.

Designed in the traditional Key West architectural style, the resort's natural tropical tones, exposed beams and ceiling fans are complemented by a striking saltwater aquarium in the lobby. Guestrooms overlook a variety of sea panoramas and natural settings including mangroves, ponds and marshes, with categories including classic guestrooms, scenic rooms, courtyard pool view, spa king and grand suites. In-room amenities include cable TV with HBO, mini-bar, microwave, coffee maker, modem connection, in-room dining and more.

Guesthouses & Bed-&-Breakfast Inns

All guesthouses and inns listed below are in Old Town.

SIMONTON COURT
320 Simonton Street
☎ 305-294-6386 or 800-944-2687
www.simontoncourt.com
Moderate-Deluxe

Simonton Court welcomes guests ages 18 and older.

Once a 19th-century cigar factory with adjacent worker cottages, Simonton Court's accommodations retain their original ambience yet have been fully updated with modern amenities. Each cottage features a porch and private patio, full bath, two private sleeping areas, kitchen, ceiling fan, and cable TV with VCR. Most have a hot tub.

The inn, manor house and mansion offer a variety of rooms featuring a queen or king bed, private bath, ceiling fans and cable TV with VCR. Many have a refrigerator and a private porch or sundeck; some also feature a kitchenette, living/dining area and Jacuzzi. The two-story townhouse incorporates two luxury suites that share a small pool and face a brick courtyard. Room rates include expanded continental breakfast.

Historic Simonton Street is named for businessman John Simonton, one of many who came to Key West seeking his fortune; he once owned the entire island, paying $2,000 for it.

Set within Simonton Court's lushly landscaped, two-acre complex are four pools and a secluded hot tub, while the Gulf of Mexico and nightly sunset celebrations are three blocks away. Concierge service is available daily from 8 am until midnight.

HERON HOUSE
512 Simonton Street
☎ 305-294-9227
www.heronhouse.com
Moderate-Expensive

Nearly hidden from view by its landscaping, Heron House is set on picturesque, historic Simonton Street. Once you pass its white stone fence, you're in an Eden of gardens and rare, hand-grown orchids. New

to the property is a rainforest with waterfall, fish pond and meandering stream. Guests can take in its exotic beauty from the breezeway, where expanded continental breakfast is served in the morning, and a wine and cheese happy hour offered in the evening.

An exotic rainforest was recently added to Heron House's grounds.

The grounds at Heron House also include brick patios, a secluded pool area and a second-story sundeck. The hotel's interiors are just as striking, graced by stained-glass transoms that let in natural sunlight, and original watercolors of the Keys created by local artists. Rooms with private decks and balconies overlook private gardens and include cable TV, morning newspaper and in-room safe. Some rooms have wet bars and refrigerators; others feature teak and oak detailing. Rooftop suites boast private treetop sunning decks.

THE MERLINN INN KEY WEST
811 Simonton Street
☎ 305-296-3336 or 800-642-4753
www.merlinnkeywest.com
Moderate-Expensive

Sister property to The Key Lime Inn (see page 442), the Merlinn Inn offers a casual environment for couples, friends and families. Unlike some other guesthouses, where history lurks around every corner, the Merlinn projects a fun, whimsical atmosphere, with rooms decked out in bright colors, gleaming wood and high-beam ceilings. The lovely courtyard and pool area are framed by tropical gardens.

You'll choose from among a variety of room styles, all non-smoking and including private baths, cable TV and complimentary continental breakfast. No telephones, though. A private phone booth with a pay phone, dataport and fax machine is available.

Rooms in the main Simonton House open onto classic Key West porches and feature queen-size four-poster beds or full-size country beds. A selection of suites includes the Captain's Suite with king-size four-poster bed, sitting area, separate dressing room with cedar closet, small refrigerator and private deck overlooking the pool. Cottages can accommodate between four and six people; most have kitchens. Children are welcome in some suites and cottages. One unit on the property is wheelchair-accessible.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

Dating back to the 1930s, Merlinn Inn's main building, the Simonton House, was first a boarding house, then a bordello. It's said that the ghost of Ruth, a "working girl" who perished in the house, still watches over the inn.

THE CURRY MANSION INN
511 Caroline Street
Key West, FL 33040
☎ 305-294-5349 or 800-253-3466
www.currymansion.com
Moderate-Expensive

Adjacent to the Curry Mansion, which was built in 1899 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, The Curry Mansion Inn features 28 rooms that are beautifully decorated in wicker and antiques, and feature private baths and telephones, wet bars, ceiling fans and cable TV. Room rates include a European breakfast buffet each morning, an afternoon cocktail party and on-site parking. Recre-

ation includes a swimming pool and hot tub. Guests also enjoy complete access to the historic Curry Mansion next door (see page 358).

CYPRESS HOUSE
601 Caroline Street
Key West, FL, 33040
☎ 305-294-6969 or 800-525-2488
www.cypresshousekw.com
Moderate-Expensive

Built in 1888 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this grand conch mansion one block from Duval Street features Bahamian architecture and a Key West emphasis on laid-back fun. Expansive porches are complete with swings, while tropical gardens provide an intimate setting for the 40-foot heated lap pool. Sunbathing is clothing-optional at Cypress House.

Rooms are bright and airy, with an eclectic mix of furniture ranging from wicker to antiques, and are housed in the main mansion or adjacent Simonton House, which is 20 years newer. All have ceiling fans, cable TV and telephones. Most have private baths. For extra space, there is a two-bedroom suite with living room and kitchenette located on the first floor of Simonton House. In the main house, what was once the master bedroom is today the Blue Room, painted in soft white and blue tones, with a king bed, small refrigerator, walk-in shower and corner tub, and a second-floor veranda overlooking historic Caroline Street.

Cypress House welcomes guests ages 18 and older.

Rates include continental breakfast buffet and a nightly cocktail hour with beer, wine and snacks served poolside.

THE CONCH HOUSE
625 Truman Avenue
☎ 305-293-0020 or 800-207-5806
www.conchhouse.com
Moderate-Expensive

One of Key West's earliest historic family estates – and still family-owned – the Conch House is distinctively Key West in appearance, with its Victorian character, gingerbread accents and Bahamian influences like wrap-around porches to catch the breeze.

Rooms in the main home or garden poolside cottage are exquisitely furnished and vary from elegant salons furnished with gleaming antiques to Caribbean-style rooms decked out in tropical tones with lots of wicker. All rooms feature private baths, cable TV, telephones, ceiling fans and include continental breakfast.

Amenities include a swimming pool and weekend social hour, and an outdoor beer and wine reception is held Fridays and Saturdays. Duval Street is minutes away.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Conch House was built between 1889 and 1892 and was purchased in 1895 by Carlos Recio, who came to Key West from Cuba in 1872 and was a close friend of Cuban revolutionary José Martí. Recio's daughter, Herminia, actually lived in the house along with her husband, Lester, and their four children .

CHELSEA HOUSE
707 Truman Avenue
☎ 305-296-2211 or 800-845-8859
www.chelseahousekw.com
Inexpensive-Expensive

Chelsea House welcome guests ages 18 and older.

Built in 1870, Chelsea House's Victorian magnificence is reflected in its imposing exterior and gracious interior furnishings, yet the subtropics are invited in through many porches and balconies. Lush gardens frame the property and surround the sparkling pool and private sundecks.

Together with the adjacent Red Rooster Inn – which has the same owner – Chelsea offers a variety of amenities, including private sunbathing, off-street parking, coffee bar (in the Red Rooster lobby) and poolside continental breakfast, included in the room rate. Concierge services are also available.

Accommodations include rooms in the main house, a small group of rooms next to the pool, garden rooms and four suites. All rooms feature private baths with complimentary bath amenities, ceiling fans, cable TV, refrigerators and in-room safes. Some rooms also have private or shared porches, sleeping lofts, oversized tubs or showers and cathedral ceilings. Pets are welcome.

RED ROOSTER INN
709 Truman Avenue
☎ 305-296-6558 or 800-845-0825
www.redroosterinn.com
Inexpensive-Moderate

The rooster may be red, but this charming mansion – built in 1870 – is yellow with white trim and houses a pleasing blend of antique accents and casual wood furniture. Accommodations range from the grand rooms of the main house to the cozy sim-

plicity of rooms located in the tower behind the mansion. All include private baths with complimentary bath amenities, ceiling fans, cable TV, phones, refrigerators and safes while some also feature balconies and porches, fireplaces and oversized tubs and showers. Continental breakfast is also included with the rate.

Available separately or as an attic suite for friends to share, Red Rooster's third floor has three bedrooms, three baths, a common room and rooftop sundecks.

Sharing amenities with Chelsea House next door, Red Rooster offers a pool and a variety of sundecks, including one that's clothing-optional. Full concierge services are available. Guests 18 and older are welcome, and pets may also be accommodated.

THE KEY LIME INN
725 Truman Avenue
☎ 305-294-5229 or 800-549-4430
Moderate-Expensive

Located on the former homestead of the pioneering Maloney family, who first settled in Key West in the 1830s, the 37-room Key Lime Inn includes the original estate home, which was built around 1854 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Rooms in the main house open onto large porches or private patios.

Other accommodations include one-room garden cottages, some with private porches and economical pool cabana rooms, several also with private patios. Guests who stay in the main house or garden cottages also enjoy VCRs, mini-refrigerators, in-room coffee and morning newspaper delivered with juice and croissants. All rooms at Key Lime feature private baths, queen or king beds, color TV, telephones

and safes. Because each unit has one bed, though, the inn is geared toward couples.

Amenities include a large pool area with wooden sundeck and plenty of lounge chairs for relaxing. Parking is available.

THE GARDENS HOTEL
526 Angela Street
☎ 305-294-2661 or 800-526-2664
www.gardenshotel.com
Expensive

Visitors step off the street into a shaded world of green botanical gardens at this once-private estate occupying nearly a quarter of an Old Town city block and reflecting the colonial charms of West Indian plantation homes. The hotel is comprised of a main house, carriage house and a Bahama-style "eyebrow" cottage. Along with two new structures designed to fit in with the existing architecture, the buildings surround a pool area and are connected by pathways paved with century-old bricks that were once used as ships' ballast. Along the paths, guests will find secluded seating areas with elegant wrought iron benches, tables and chairs.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

The "eyebrow" cottage is so named because its slanting roof partially covers the second-story windows.

There are 17 rooms, including a master suite and carriage house suite, two historic rooms in the main house, 12 garden and courtyard rooms, and the secluded eyebrow cottage. Most feature Jacuzzi tubs and all boast garden views. The decor is sumptuous,

with furniture of rich mahogany or yew, oak hardwood floors, brass and iron beds, china lamps and mirrors with beveled glass.

In-room amenities include luxurious toiletries, mini-bar, coffee maker, color TV, telephone, hair dryer, ceiling fan, robe and safe. Rates include breakfast, served each morning in the Garden Room or al fresco on the adjoining porch. Guests staying three or more nights receive a complimentary bottle of champagne on arrival.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

The botanical gardens at the Gardens Hotel were planted and nurtured for nearly 50 years by Peggy Mills, who bought one of Key West's oldest Bahama-style homes on Angela Street in 1930, and subsequently expanded the estate to make room for her garden.

Specialty Rentals

TRUMAN ANNEX
200 Front Street, Building 45
Key West
☎ 305-292-1881 or 800-884-RENT (7368)
www.trumanannex.com

Rentals include condos, townhomes and residential homes. Weekly rates range from $800 to $3,500.

Campgrounds

BOYD'S KEY WEST CAMPGROUND
6401 Maloney Avenue
☎ 305-294-1465
www.gocampingamerica.com/boydskeywest
Inexpensive

Offering a total 203 RV sites, 141 with complete hook-ups, Boyd's Key West Campground also features a large pool area, watersports including fishing, swimming diving and skiing, a boat dock and marina, tiki hut with large-screen TV, game room, pool table, picnic pavilion, camp store and 24-hour security. Waterfront and inland sites, as well as tent sites, are available. Rates are daily or monthly; camper storage is also available.

Best Places to Eat

As you might expect, seafood dominates most menus in the Keys. Surrounded by water and a bustling fishing industry, the variety of choices is staggering and freshness all but guaranteed. Dining dockside in one of many local seafood restaurants, you may even see the boats pulling up with their just-caught bounty from the sea.

Restaurants are listed in descending Mile Marker order.

Of course, local eateries are proud to show off their culinary expertise in other areas as well, from New American to Caribbean, Italian to Asian, soup to nuts. In short, no matter what you're hungry for, you'll find a menu to satisfy your taste in the Keys. Key West, in particular, boasts a culinary variety that would be the envy of any major city.

KEYS CUISINE

Menus in the Keys have a vocabulary all their own. Here are some unique culinary items you should try.

- **Stone crab claws**. Best enjoyed chilled, accompanied by a side dish of mustard sauce. Stone crab season is Oct. 15-May 15.
- **Florida lobster**. Sometimes called "crawfish" or "spiny lobster," Florida lobster doesn't have the claws that Maine lobsters do. Instead, the tails are broiled and served with butter.
- **Conch**. With a taste similar to clams, the meat of this large mollusk is used to make spicy chowder and crunchy fritters. It is also served raw in salads, or breaded and fried as a steak (sometimes called "cracked conch").
- **Key lime pie**. Sweet, creamy and tart rolled into one taste sensation. Don't be fooled by imitations – real Key lime pie is yellow, not green.

The Alive Price Scale

Our scale is based on the price of a single dinner entrée. Appetizer, salad, drinks and dessert will be extra. So will dinner side dishes, when the menu is à la carte. Unless otherwise noted, all restaurants accept major credit cards.

DINING PRICE SCALE
Inexpensive. . . . . .Entrées are $10 or less
Moderate. . . . . Entrées $10-$20
Expensive . . . . . .Entrées $20 and higher

Restaurant hours of operation are subject to change; it's best to call ahead.

TIP

Some restaurants may automatically add a gratuity for groups of five or more.

What to Wear

Dining in the Keys is almost always casual – no jackets required – or what's known as "Keys casual," an easy, island-style look that includes shorts, tennis shoes or sandals, light slacks, sport shirts, cotton blouses and sundresses, with the emphasis on comfort. You'll fit right into the laid-back scene around you as you sit al fresco, a light breeze blowing off the water, sipping a tropical drink and listening to the sounds of a calypso band. There's nothing quite like it anywhere in the US.

Key Largo

ITALIAN FISHERMAN
MM104 (B)
☎ 305-451-4471
Moderate

Italian favorites blend with seafood specialties at this casual waterfront eatery. Entrées include traditional dishes like lasagna, baked ziti, veal parmigiana and linguine with clam sauce, along with seafood items such as fried cracked conch, whole yellowtail, grilled or blackened tuna, stuffed grouper and lobster tail paired with steak or a seafood combo. The specialty of the house is linguine marechiaro, featuring the catch of the day with scallops, shrimp, and mussels, lightly sautéed with homemade marinara sauce. There are a variety of poultry dishes as well, including chargrilled chicken breast, while homemade pizza, salads and sandwiches make quick meals. Desserts include tiramisu and Key lime pie. A children's menu is available. Lunch, 11:30 am-3 pm; dinner, 3-10 pm daily.

GUS' GRILLE
Marriott Key Largo, MM 103.8 (B)
☎ 305-453-0000
Moderate

Gorgeous bay sunsets provide the backdrop for Gus' menu of "Floribbean" specialties, including yellowtail snapper in an almond crust with avocado, orange and chive sweet butter sauce; grilled dolphin served with mango and papaya sauce; coconut shrimp dipped in piña colada butter; and Florida spiny lobster sautéed with spinach. Other dinner entrées include filet mignon, New York sirloin, an array of pasta dishes, and inexpensive pizzas from

the wood-burning oven. Healthy "spa cuisine" selections include grilled breast of chicken and vegetarian stir-fry with brown rice. Salads, sandwiches and appetizers like Gulf shrimp, fresh oysters or clams on the halfshell and lump crab cakes round out the dinner menu.

Breakfast at Gus' includes the familiar egg, pancake and waffle dishes, along with a spa menu, while lunch features an array of sandwiches and some items from the dinner menu. Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner from 7 am-11 pm; until midnight Fridays and Saturdays.

THE QUAY
MM 102.5 (B)
☎ 305-451-0943
Moderate-Expensive

The Quay is casual, but feel free to dress up for a night of fine dining. Entrées includes such seafood favorites as fresh Maine lobster and stone crab claws in season, along with seafood specialties like broiled sea scallops and blackened swordfish. You may also enjoy the local catch of the day, sautéed, broiled, grilled or fried. Landlubbers can opt for prime rib, filet mignon, New York strip steak, rack of lamb, veal chop, or chicken Monte Carlo, stuffed with prosciutto, Swiss cheese and garlic. They also serve an array of pasta dishes along with a daily pasta featuring shrimp, lobster, scallops or a seafood combo. Entrées come with soup or salad. Desserts include chocolate Kahlua cake, baked Alaska and, of course, Key lime pie. A wine list and children's menu are also available.

The Quay offers two options, a fine indoor dining restaurant and a casual, outdoor tiki bar.

A more relaxed atmosphere awaits outdoors at the **Bayside Tiki Grill**, where diners sit by the water and enjoy a full complement of tropical drinks, in-

cluding mai tais, fruit daiquiris and Key Largo rum-runners. The menu features hot appetizers and selections from the raw bar, along with soups and salads. Entrées include sandwiches, fried shrimp and burgers, served with fries, and grilled dishes, including marinated seafood brochette, baby back ribs and the catch of the day. Prices at the Tiki Grill are inexpensive.

In addition to great dining, the Quay offers live entertainment, its own sand beach with watersports rentals, and dockage if you arrive by boat. Dinner nightly, 4-10 pm. The Bayside Tiki Grill is open for lunch and dinner from 11 am-10 pm.

THE FISH HOUSE
MM 102.4 (O)
☎ 305-451-HOOK
Moderate

Shoes and shirts are the only wardrobe requirement at this laid-back seafood house, offering a vast menu of seafood specialties, including fresh fish served in a variety of ways, from fried and broiled to Jamaican jerk style and blackened Cajun style. Among the shellfish dishes are jumbo shrimp, snow and king crab, soft shell crabs, Florida lobster and scallops. If seafood's not your thing, try a sirloin steak, filet mignon or the Southern fried chicken. Combination platters include surf & turf, and fried shrimp with baby back ribs. Some combination entrées run more to the expensive side. All dinners include potato or rice, corn on the cob and homemade cole slaw.

The Fish House also offers a variety of hot and cold appetizers, salads, pastas, house wines and draft beer, and a children's menu. Lunch 11:30 am-4 pm; dinner 4-10 pm daily.

SNOOK'S BAYSIDE
MM 99.9 (B)
☎ 305-453-3799
Moderate

Snook's Bayside is closed in September.

Specializing in seafood, Angus beef, veal and pasta specialties, award-winning Snook's also boasts an extensive wine list and daily specials. Or bring in your own fresh catch for the chef to cook.

To start, try the coconut conch chowder or conch gazpacho before moving on to an appetizer of grilled portobello mushrooms, steamed mussels or escargots in champagne sauce. Among the entrées are Snook's hazelnut chicken, conch steak, steak and seafood combinations, and the catch of the day topped with exotic fruits. Other specialties include Mediterranean pasta with lobster, shrimp, and scallops, and a classic paella for two. Afterward, try one of their homemade desserts – chocolate suicide cake, cappuccino cake, cheesecake, Key lime pie, and rum raisin or apple cherry bread pudding. A children's menu is available.

At Snook's you may dine inside or outside overlooking the water. You can also enjoy live entertainment **Patrick's Waterfront Bar**, offering exotic drinks and a bar menu (inexpensive). Lunch, 11:30 am-3:30 pm; dinner, 5-9:30 pm daily. Reservations suggested.

SNAPPER'S WATERFRONT SALOON & RAW BAR
MM 94.5 (O)
☎ 305-852-5956
Moderate-Expensive

Snapper's has three bars.

Ultra casual and fun, waterfront Snapper's features a variety of seafood dishes – including items from the raw bar – with specialties such as roasted

yellowtail in a basil cream sauce; snapper Dakota, coated with toasted almonds and parmesan; and coconut crusted shrimp. Pasta dishes include snapper seafood pasta and pasta primavera; beef and chicken specialties include New York sirloin steak, and chicken & shrimp curry served with tropical chutney and rice. With any entrée, you can add a crab cake for $3.50 extra. Appetizers are hearty and include artichoke spinach dip and nut-crusted baked brie. Dinner reservations are suggested.

Snapper's also offers three bars – one in the restaurant, plus a tiki bar and the **Turtle Club** featuring its own light-bite menu. There is docking available at the adjacent marina for diners who boat in. Open daily for lunch and dinner, 11 am-10 pm weekdays and to 11 pm weekends.

COPPER KETTLE RESTAURANT
MM 91.8 (O), Key Largo
☎ 305-852-4113
Moderate

Located in the historic Tavernier Hotel and reflecting the same cozy, cottage atmosphere, Copper Kettle is a Keys dining tradition, serving homey favorites like French toast, pancakes and omelettes for breakfast, and an array of soups, salads and sandwiches for lunch. For dinner, choices include Wild Forest Chicken, served with angel hair pasta in a goat cheese, mushroom and Madeira wine cream sauce; an eight-ounce prime rib with potatoes and vegetables; and grilled yellowfin tuna served with rice and vegetables. The dinner menu also features a rich spinach and feta cheese pie served with Greek salad; fish and chips; and the basic burger with fries. Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner from 7 am to 10 pm.

Islamorada

MARKER 88
MM 88 (B)
☎ 305-852-9315
Expensive

A rustic atmosphere with nautical touches provides the perfect setting for fresh Florida seafood and classic continental cuisine at this acclaimed restaurant. From Florida waters, enjoy broiled or steamed lobster tails, fried or steamed Key West pink shrimp, conch steak sautéed in lemon parsley or garlic butter, grilled tuna steak, or Florida Bay stone crab claws (in season). The daily fresh fish selection is served in a seemingly endless variety of ways; the chef's signature Floribbean fish preparations include "Martinique" – sautéed and topped with sweet basil tomato concassé and grilled bananas; and "Rangoon" – sautéed with currant gelée and cinnamon, then garnished with diced mango, papaya, pineapple and bananas.

Chef's specials also include steaks, veal dishes, pork chops and rack of lamb. For light eaters, a moderately priced menu features smaller portions. Desserts include Key lime baked Alaska, while a variety of hot and cold appetizers includes conch ceviche and blueberry banana bisque. Reservations are suggested. Open nightly, 5-11 pm; closed Mondays.

ATLANTIC'S EDGE
Cheeca Lodge, MM 82 (O)
☎ 305-664-4651
Expensive

Winner of numerous accolades, including a AAA four-diamond award, Atlantic's Edge boasts the cu-

Chef Dawn Sieber of Atlantic's Edge is a media celebrity, thanks to her innovative menus.

linary expertise of acclaimed chef Dawn Sieber, who has appeared on *CBS This Morning*, the Food Network and PBS' *Great Chefs, Great Cities*. Within her repertoire of fresh seafood, fine steaks and innovative appetizers, popular menu items include jerked rack of lamb with malanga chayote hash, tamarind-ginger lamb glaze and tomato-mango chutney. Chef Sieber's signature dish, though, is onion-crusted snapper with Roma tomatoes and braised artichokes, balsamic vinegar and olive oil. Sieber's team will also prepare their "Family Fish Platter" with the featured catch of the day, or with fish caught by the diners themselves.

A proponent of farm-raised fish and beef, Sieber's dishes are prepared with farm-raised sea bass, redfish, prawns and other species. The menu also includes farm-raised buffalo, quail, venison, duck and free-range chicken.

Dining at Atlantic's Edge is complemented by spectacular panoramic views of the Atlantic Ocean. Despite its upscale ambience, dress is casual; no jackets are required. Reservations are suggested. Open nightly, 5:30-10 pm.

LORELEI RESTAURANT & CABANA BAR
MM 82 (B)
☎ 305-664-4656 (restaurant) or
305-664-4338 (Cabana Bar)
Moderate

Lorelei has both an indoor restaurant and an outdoor bar with its own menu.

A great gathering place for sunset-watching on the bay, Lorelei's casual indoor restaurant offers an array of seafood favorites, including Florida lobster in season, Key West shrimp, deep-sea scallops, and dolphin, grouper or snapper prepared in a variety of ways. Specialties include Key lime dolphin and a heaping seafood combination platter. Landlubbers

can opt for steaks, poultry or pasta dishes. For vegetarians, there is vegetable strudel, prepared with steamed veggies in a crisp phyllo pastry. The restaurant begins serving dinner nightly at 5 pm with an hour-long early-bird menu. Special menus include Shrimp Madness, featuring a range of preparations, including barbecued, stuffed and Jamaican jerk-grilled shrimp. Reservations are taken for parties of five or more. Outdoors at the Cabana Bar, breakfast starts at 7 am with egg dishes galore, pancakes, and more. Lunch begins at 11 am with salads, sandwiches and finger foods, and the same menu carries through to dinner. The Cabana Bar also features live music nightly, starting at sunset. Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner until 10 pm weekdays, and 10:30 pm Fridays and Saturdays.

MANNY & ISA'S KITCHEN
MM 81.6 (O)
☎ 305-664-5019
Moderate

If you visited Miami before coming to the Keys, chances are you've sampled some great Cuban food, but this casual eatery would rival the best of Miami's *cocinas* (kitchens). Serving traditional favorites like Cuban-style chicken fricassee, beef stew, roast pork and *ropa vieja* – literally it means "old clothes," but it's actually shredded beef with onions. The restaurant also features broiled fish and lobster, lobster enchiladas and paella. Daily specials include fish on Fridays. In addition to a scrumptious Key lime pie, desserts include flan (custard drizzled with caramel), natilla (a rich pudding), and creamy rice pudding. Open daily except Tuesdays for lunch and dinner from 11 am to 9 pm.

The owners of Manny & Isa's take an annual six-week vacation that spans parts of September and October.

TIME OUT BARBECUE
MM 81.5 (O)
☎ 305-664-8911
Inexpensive-Moderate

Be prepared to loosen your belt a notch. This casual eatery serves luscious barbecued ribs, pork, beef and chicken as well as heaping sandwiches and char-broiled burgers. Platters and combination dinners are served with garlic bread, choice of baked beans or French fries, and cole slaw that, refreshingly, is not swimming in mayo but is tart and crunchy. The menu also includes specials just for kids, salads, and a variety of beverages, including beer and wine. Open daily from 11:30 am-10 pm.

GREEN TURTLE INN
MM 81.5 (O)
☎ 305-664-9595
Moderate

Green Turtle Inn cans its own chowders, which are available for purchase.

Named for the sea turtles that dominated its menu back in 1947, the Green Turtle Inn still serves its famous turtle chowder; if you wish, you can buy some to bring home. Other chowders include conch, clam and fish. They also can their delicious Key lime pie filling (so you can fool the folks back home!).

The menu includes a number of seafood specialties, including senator meunière, covered with shallots, sliced almonds and fresh mushrooms; seafood marinara, with shrimp, crab and scallops served in a light tomato sauce; and jumbo shrimp scampi with garlic butter and white wine sauce. Want something different? Try the alligator steak, a complete dinner served with choice of potatoes or chowder, salad or slaw, and tea or coffee. Other menu items include jumbo shrimp, Florida lobster, stone crabs in season and an array of steaks and chops.

Dress is casual at the Green Turtle. On Friday and Saturday nights, an illusionist performs. For dinner or show reservations, call ☎ 305-664-9031. Open daily for lunch and dinner from noon until 10 pm; closed Mondays.

THE HUNGRY TARPON
MM 77.5 (B)
☎ 305-664-0535
Inexpensive

Stop in early for *huevos rancheros*, homemade biscuits and gravy, or grits and grunts (that's fish, for you landlubbers). For lunch, the Tarpon serves fresh fish sandwiches, burgers, Philly cheese steak sandwiches, conch fritters and more. Open daily for breakfast and lunch only, 6:30 am-3:30 pm.

Marathon

WATERSEDGE
MM 61 (O)
☎ 305-743-7000
Expensive

Located at Hawk's Cay Resort on Duck Key, the recently renovated WatersEdge offers fresh-from-the-boat seafood specialties in a casually elegant setting, with seating either dockside by the marina or inside within a nautical atmosphere. Seafood specialties include whole yellowtail snapper in a crispy Key lime batter, and yellowfin tuna over wasabi potatoes, topped with a Caribbean plum sauce. Lamb chops are charbroiled with a wild berry glaze and served with asparagus over mashed potatoes, while a 20-ounce bone-in ribeye steak is served grilled or blackened. For those who want a taste of both land and sea, try the jumbo shrimp and tournedos of beef,

sautéed with vine-ripened tomatoes, fresh basil and a Chardonnay reduction glaze. Reservations are recommended. Open nightly, 6-10 pm.

VILLAGE CAFE
MM 58 (B)
☎ 305-743-9090
Inexpensive-Moderate

Located in the Gulfside Village Plaza, the Village Café is a friendly, neighborhood kind of place, serving Italian and seafood specialties. A host of pasta dishes includes spaghetti, linguine and ziti prepared with a variety of sauces, meatballs and sausages. Seafood is served with zest, from shrimp oreganata and fra diavolo style to cioppino, an Italian-style seafood stew with shrimp, crabmeat and clams in a tomato-basil broth. The fresh catch of the day is charbroiled, poached, baked or served Française-style in lemon, butter and white wine. Village Café also serves beef, poultry and veal dishes, along with eggplant and pizza. Breakfast and lunch are offered as well. Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner from 8 am until 10 pm. Take-out is available.

ISLAND TIKI BAR & RESTAURANT
MM 54 (B)
☎ 305-743-4191
Moderate

Island Tiki Bar offers on-site water-sports and sunset cruises.

Island Tiki Bar & Restaurant actually juts out into the bay on a peninsula, and dining is mostly outdoors, though there are a few tables inside. Breathtaking sunsets accompany every meal. Nightly specials include grouper and mahi-mahi prepared in a variety of ways. Dolphin Française is a popular menu item, dipped in flour and an egg wash, then fried or sautéed. A selection of pastas includes the

shellfish lover's pasta with clams, mussels and shrimp in a light cream sauce. The restaurant also serves burgers, fried and grilled fish sandwiches, and fish baskets. All fish is fresh from the boat daily.

For dessert, try the homemade Key lime pie or berry tart. To accompany your meal, the full bar serves such specialty drinks as rumrunners and flavored margaritas, including mango, strawberry and raspberry. Open daily for lunch and dinner, 11 am-11 pm.

KEY COLONY INN
MM 54.5 (O)
☎ 305-743-0100
Moderate

Casual Key Colony Inn has an extensive menu that includes seafood, continental cuisine, steaks, poultry and veal. Among their seafood specialties include lobster tails, cracked conch, fried scallops and an assortment of fish dishes, including yellowtail, grouper and snapper, prepared in a variety of sauces. On the continental side, dishes range from chicken cordon bleu and veal marsala to shrimp primavera and tortellini oreganata. Veal and chicken are cooked in a variety of styles, from saucy to simple. And steak lovers can have theirs any way from au poivre to charbroiled. The menu also includes appetizers, soups and salads, children's selections and desserts. The lunch menu features seafood entrées and sandwiches. Open daily; lunch 11 am-2:30 pm, dinner 5-10 pm.

BARRACUDA GRILL
MM 49.5 (B)
☎ (305) 743-3314
Moderate-Expensive

If you like it hot, hot, hot, you'll love Fran's Voodoo Stew at Barracuda Grill, a mix of fish, calamari, big pink shrimp and fresh veggies in a spicy saffron-tomato stock.

This small, bistro-style restaurant boasts an eclectic New American menu and friendly, personalized service to go with it. Entrées include pan-cooked snapper with tropical mango salsa, chicken enchiladas with green chile pinto beans and roasted breast of young duckling with apricot glaze. On the hearty side, there's a 22-ounce Angus steak, rack of New Zealand lamb with mushrooms, and grilled tenderloin of beef. Appetizers are just as interesting and include "tipsy" olives, marinated in your choice of vodka or gin; a "kicked-up" quesadilla with sour cream and salsa; and a "radical" shrimp cocktail with Japanese seaweed, grilled portobello mushroom and a soy drizzle.

A children's menu is available, and there are smaller mix-and-match plates served during the summer. In season, Barracuda Grill opens daily except Sundays at 6 pm ; during the summer they are open Wednesdays to Saturdays at 6:30 pm. Closing times vary, but it's not a late-night eating spot.

Lower Keys

NO NAME PUB
MM 30 (B)
Big Pine Key
☎ 305-872-9115
Inexpensive

Remember the name. This locals' haunt on Big Pine Key is one of the oldest bars in the area, with a rustic charm that's absolutely authentic and not imitated

for tourists. Patrons are served chili, smoked fish dip and sandwiches on paper plates. Some also consider No Name Pub's pizza the best around. Open for lunch and dinner daily, 11 am-11 pm.

CHINA GARDEN BIG PINE
MM 30 (B)
Big Pine Key
☎ 305-872-8861
Inexpensive-Moderate

If you get a hankering for Chinese during your stay in the Keys, stop in at China Garden for familiar lo mein, foo young and sweet-and-sour dishes. House specialties, Hunan and Szechuan meals and special combination platters are all offered. Take-out or eat in. Open daily for lunch and dinner.

THE RESTAURANT
AT LITTLE PALM ISLAND RESORT
MM 28.5 (O)
Little Torch Key
☎ 305-872-2551
Expensive

An epicurean delight at one of the Keys' most exclusive resorts. Since Little Palm Island occupies a five-acre island offshore, your dining adventure begins with a launch ride from the shore station on Little Torch Key. From there, it's on to the airy, spacious dining room or the dining terrace perched above Little Palm's pristine beach, where you'll be amazed at the innovative menu created by Chef Adam Votaw. Using freshly caught seafood and other local fare, along with Key limes and herbs grown on property, Chef Votaw fuses Floribbean cuisine with Asian and French influences in each individually prepared dish, and has won raves from numerous restaurant reviewers.

Little Palm Restaurant celebrates the holidays with a gourmet Thanksgiving dinner, and a gala New Year's Eve.

Here's a sampling: pan-fried, cornmeal-crusted grouper with sweet pickle Chardonnay sauce; grilled salmon with warm vegetable salad and smoked root chips; or pan-seared filet of beef tenderloin with duck foie gras and black truffle jus. Appetizers include chili-spiced chilled lobster with jasmine rice and sweet, hot pineapple sauce; and Szechwan tuna in a carrot daikon salad. Among the not-to-be-missed desserts are apple charlotte in a vanilla caramel sauce, and a coconut cream-filled chocolate ravioli with praline sauce. An extensive wine list further enhances your meal. Special meals at the restaurant include Sunday brunch.

Weekend dinner reservations should be made early in the week; allow one or two days' advance notice for weekdays. Attire should be dress-casual; men must wear a shirt with collar. No jeans or cutoffs. Serving breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. Reservations are required for all meals.

MONTE'S RESTAURANT & FISH MARKET
MM 25 (B)
Summerland Key
☎ 305-745-3731
Moderate

Monte's fish market sells fresh scallops, lobster, oysters, shrimp, clams, fish and stone crabs (in season) daily.

This casual seafood hangout offers a no-fuss menu of fried and grilled fish, shrimp prepared a variety of ways, softshell crabs, broiled lobster, a cold seafood platter featuring cocktail shrimp, daily seafood salad and stone crab claws, and a super seafood basket with fish, stuffed fish, scallops, oysters, conch, shrimp and stone crab. Dinners include fries or parsley potatoes and cole slaw. Sandwiches, an array of appetizers and clams or oysters on the half shell are also offered. A greater variety of sandwiches are served for lunch, along with deep-sea

baskets of fried favorites including fish, oysters, scallops, conch and clam strips. Open daily for lunch and dinner, 9 am-10 pm.

SANDBAR
MM 28.5 (B)
Little Torch Key
☎ 305-872-9989
Inexpensive-Moderate

Waterfront dining in a very casual, laid-back atmosphere, offering everything from fun finger food to seafood entrées. A wide array of sandwiches includes grilled or fried catch of the day, fried conch steak, a Maryland-style crab cake sandwich, and oyster or scallop "poor boys." There are greasy, satisfying baskets of clam strips, fish, chicken and lobster bites, served with fries and island cole slaw, as well as cheese, vegetable, chicken or shrimp quesadillas. Seafood entrées include the fresh catch of the day, coconut shrimp, scallops, Florida lobster, grilled fresh tuna, stone crabs in season, and surf-and-turf specialties. For landlubbers, there are steaks, burgers and chicken dishes, and for kids, a special menu of familiar favorites. Open daily for lunch and dinner, 11 am-10 pm. Sandbar's pier offers watercraft rentals and deep-sea and flats fishing charters.

Key West

With the exception of Benihana, all Key West restaurants listed are located in Old Town.

A&B LOBSTER HOUSE
700 Front Street
☎ 305-294-5880
Expensive

More than 50 years after it first opened, A&B is still going strong as a premier seafood restaurant, featuring Maine and Florida lobsters, a selection of local seafood specialties, and unique pasta and meat dishes. Be sure to try one of their classic stews and pan roasts, prepared by slow-roasting oysters, clams, mussels and lobsters, then adding them to a broth of herbs and vegetables laced with cream and sherry. Entrées include sesame-seared yellowfin tuna, broiled Key West lobster tail, Maine lobster pasta and mojo-grilled pork chops served with sweet corn polenta. An extensive wine list includes rare California vintages. Dinner reservations are preferred. After dinner, head next door to **Berlin's Bar**, offering a selection of fine cigars and after-dinner drinks. Open nightly from 5 pm-11pm.

BAGATELLE
115 Duval Street
☎ 305-296-6609
Moderate

Bagatelle's outdoor verandas let you people-watch as you dine.

Combining the traditions of French cooking with tastes from the tropics, Bagatelle features such entrées as sesame tuna, pecan dolphin, shrimp and scallop linguine, Florida lobster and Jamaican sweet curry chicken. For the less adventurous, there is roasted duck, filet mignon and Gorgonzola New York strip steak. Appetizers include a savory seafood chowder, mussels Bagatelle and conch ceviche. For lunch, enjoy such casual offerings as burgers, sandwiches and salads. Reservations are suggested. Open daily for lunch, 11:30 am-4:30 pm; dinner 5:30-10:30 pm; until 11 pm Fridays and Saturdays.

BAHAMA MAMA'S
Corner of Whitehead & Petronia
☎ 305-294-3355
Moderate

Enjoy authentic Bahamian-style seafood dishes like fried coconut shrimp with coconut rum sauce, curried conch, and red or yellow snapper. Bahamian-style land platters include curried ginger chicken and blackened lamb chops. Entrées are served with plantains, salad and a choice of two sides, which include pigeon peas and rice, collard greens, and cheese grits. As an appetizer, try the conch fritters – heavy on the conch and light on the dough – or the zesty Mama's back bean chili. Open daily, 11 am-10 pm.

BENIHANA
3591 S. Roosevelt Blvd.
☎ 305-294-6400
Moderate-Expensive

Located next to the airport, Benihana offers terrific Japanese grill cooking and a fascinating live show – the food. As aficionados know, watching the chefs slice, dice, carve and flip their dinner selection is truly thrilling. Choices include teriyaki chicken and steak, filet mignon, fresh snapper, and steak and seafood combinations. Open nightly, 5:30-10 pm.

THE DELI
531 Truman Avenue
☎ 305-294-1464
Inexpensive-Moderate

The Deli is actually a restaurant with a surprisingly varied menu that includes beef, chicken, pork, turkey and all kinds of fresh fish, from dolphin and snapper to cobia and grouper. All your favorite deli

The Deli has been family-owned for more than 50 years.

sandwiches are here, too, including Reubens and Rachels. For breakfast, enjoy great coffee with bagels, eggs, pancakes and every omelette imaginable. Service is friendly and personable. Open daily, 7:30 am-10 pm.

DIM SUM'S FAR EAST
613 1/2 Duval Street
☎ 305-294-6230
Moderate

Though its name may conjure images of Chinese dumplings, this eclectic Asian eatery serves everything from Indian curries and Chinese stir-fry favorites to Korean specialties and dishes from Thailand, Burma and Japan. Entrées include moo shu pork, Burmese chicken simmered in coconut sauce, chicken and shrimp in a green Thai curry, and boneless half duck roasted in Asian spices. Seafood dishes include grilled yellowfin tuna with wasabi mayonnaise sauce, and Thai whole snapper. There are a number of vegetarian items, including moo shu tofu, as well as a tempting array of appetizers, soups and salads. Reservations are suggested. Open nightly except Thursdays, 5:30-10 pm.

DUFFY'S STEAK & LOBSTER HOUSE
1007 Simonton Street
☎ 305-296-4900
Moderate

This relaxed local hangout boasts great steaks including filet mignon, T-bone, porterhouse, ribeye and New York strip, along with three cuts of slow-roasted prime rib. Live Maine and Florida lobster are served, as well as jumbo shrimp, shrimp scampi and grouper. Those who want a little of both can try a surf-and-turf combination, priced higher than

moderate. Entrées are served with salad, bread, and choice of baked potato, French fries, rice or vegetable. Daily specials like stone crab claws, seafood pasta, Cajun stir-fry and fillets of dolphin and grilled salmon are also featured. Duffy's has a full bar. Open daily, 11:30 am-11 pm.

HALFSHELL RAW BAR
231 Margaret Street
☎ 305-294-7496
Inexpensive-Moderate

"Come as you are" to this relaxed waterfront raw bar featuring fresh fish, oysters, clams, conch and shrimp direct from their own fish market. In season, be sure to sample stone crab claws and Florida lobster. Served with corn, cole slaw and potatoes, entrées include grilled shrimp, broiled scallops, cracked conch, seafood kebabs and barbecue ribs. A selection of sandwiches includes a fried oyster Po'Boy and tuna barbecue-style. For starters, don't miss the flavorful conch chowder. Open daily for lunch and dinner, 11 am-10 pm; open at noon on Sundays.

HARD ROCK CAFE
313 Duval Street
☎ 305-293-0120
Inexpensive-Moderate

A known quantity to most, the Hard Rock Key West is notable for its picturesque location in a Victorian "gingerbread" house. If you want a quiet, intimate dinner, this isn't the place for you. However, if you're looking for fun, music and classic American cuisine, it's a blast. Open daily for lunch and dinner, 11 am-midnight.

KELLY'S CARIBBEAN BAR GRILL & BREWERY
301 Whitehead Street
☎ 305-293-8484
www.kellyskeywest.com
Moderate-Expensive

Kelly's Caribbean is owned by actress Kelly McGillis.

Housed in the original headquarters of Pan American World Airways, Kelly's is a favorite among visitors for its one-two punch of celebrity and history. The food is great, too, as you'll discover when you try dishes like camarones Curaçao – Gulf shrimp marinated in coconut milk, lime juice, ginger and teriyaki; or "the chop," a 12-ounce pork chop marinated in citrus, teriyaki and garlic, grilled and served with roasted potatoes, julienne vegetables, and a mango barbecue sauce. Pasta and seafood dominate the island-style menu, which also features a full array of soups, salads and appetizers. For dessert, try Kelly's take on Key lime pie or the sweet potato pie with cinnamon ice cream.

Complementing your meal are Kelly's own specialty beers, including Key West Golden Ale, Havana Red Ale and Paradiso Caribe Beer Cooler. Open daily; lunch noon-4 pm; dinner 5-10 pm.

LOUIE'S BACKYARD
700 Waddell Avenue
☎ 305-294-1061
Expensive

A spectacular view, relaxed Keys ambience, a great Caribbean-American menu and personal service make Louie's one of the most popular restaurants in the Keys, according to the Zagat Survey. The dinner menu features such entrées as sautéed Key West shrimp with a saffron noodle cake and tomato-onion fondue; grilled aged sirloin steak with roasted red

onions and bacon-horseradish mashed potatoes; and grilled spice-rubbed loin of venison with onions, apples and juniper berries. Appetizers include cracked farm-raised baby conch with wasabi and hot pepper jelly; Florida lobster braised in truffle butter with spinach and prosciutto; and an array of salads, such as oak leaf lettuce with citrus-cured trout, cucumbers, pomegranates and walnuts.

Housed in the former oceanfront home of an early 1900s wrecker, Louie's is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The lunch menu features a grilled fish sandwich with sour orange mustard sauce; a stacked duck enchilada with green chile sauce and roasted corn; and a salad of marinated butternut squash with greens in a pomegranate vinaigrette. Louie's also offers a Sunday brunch with a variety of dishes complemented by cocktails, champagnes and wine drinks, served 11:30 am-3 pm.

The restaurant is open daily for lunch, 11:30 am-3 pm and dinner, 6-10 pm. Brunch and dinner reservations are recommended.

MANGIA MANGIA
900 Southard Street
☎ 305-294-2469
Moderate

Homemade is the word at Mangia Mangia – which, by the way, means "Eat, eat!" And that's what you'll do when you taste the pasta, paired with a luscious homemade sauce like marinara, Alfredo, seafood sauce or hearty meat sauce. House specialties also include pasta and seafood combinations, along with salmon and chicken from the grill. If your taste buds long for something savory, try the *pollo con funghi e piselli* – sautéed, diced chicken breast with fresh mushrooms, garlic, shallots, green peas and marinara sauce; or the *bollito misto di mare* – fresh scallops, shrimp, conch, salmon and local fish flash-sautéed

Pasta is made fresh daily at Mangia Mangia.

in olive oil with garlic, shallots, white wine and finished in an herbed clam broth. A bottle of wine from their enormous selection and a variety of desserts top the meal off perfectly. Dine indoors or outside on the brick patio. Open nightly, 5:30-10 pm.

PIER HOUSE RESTAURANT
One Duval Street
☎ 305-296-4600
Expensive

Located in the Pier House Resort, Pier House Restaurant offers fine dining in a casual atmosphere overlooking the Gulf of Mexico. Here, American cuisine blends with the flavor of the tropics to produce dishes like guava-glazed roasted pork tenderloin, yellowtail snapper in a papaya, avocado and Key lime butter sauce, and grilled mahi-mahi in a macadamia nut crust, served with fried rice and plantains. Appetizers include pan-seared jerk-spiced scallops with papaya salsa and seared tuna carpaccio with lime oil and wasabi. Reservations are recommended. Open nightly from 6:30 pm.

SQUARE ONE RESTAURANT
1075 Duval Street
☎ 305-296-4300
Moderate-Expensive

Music floats from the baby grand piano by the door. Tables are set with linens, fine china and stemware. The look may be elegant, but Square One is friendly, comfortable and popular with tourists and locals alike. Entrées such as sautéed pistachio-encrusted breast of chicken and roast New Zealand rack of lamb are beautifully presented by an attentive staff, along with seafood selections that include sautéed sea scallops with spinach and miso-marinated Chil-

ean salmon. Unique pasta dishes, appetizers and salads are also noteworthy. Desserts are announced nightly. Square One's menu changes according to the availability of fresh items. Open nightly at 6 pm; Happy Hour 4:30-6:30 pm.

TURTLE KRAALS WATERFRONT GRILL & BAR
One Lands End Village
☎ 305-294-2640
Inexpensive-Moderate

The Tower Bar adjacent to Turtle Kraals serves micro-brewery beer, imported beer and oversized margaritas.

It used to be the only turtle soup cannery in the country, but now Turtle Kraals is a fun, friendly waterfront restaurant and bar serving seafood specialties flavored with tastes from the Caribbean and Mexico. The menu includes Bahamian seafood stew, seafood enchiladas, lobster chile rellenos and grilled Key West shrimp. Other choices include grilled smoked prime rib, Cajun seafood gumbo and a fish-and-fries combo. Starters run the gamut from oysters and beer-steamed shrimp to red chili conch fingers and grilled Jamaican pizza. Top it all off with passion fruit and mango shortcake. For lunch, an array of sandwiches and wraps includes the Turtle Kraals fish sandwich, a seafood salad wrap and the turkey mango wrap with matchstick vegetables and mango salad. Open daily for lunch and dinner from 11 am-10:30 pm.

TWO FRIENDS PATIO RESTAURANT
512 Front Street
☎ 305-296-3124
Moderate

An early bird menu is offered from 5-8 pm at Two Friends.

Located minutes from Mallory Square, Two Friends features an open-air patio setting that's great for relaxing and people-watching. Menu items include stuffed mahi-mahi baked with shrimp and jack cheese, porterhouse steak, seafood fettucine and lobster combos that are priced slightly higher than moderate. An early bird menu is served from 5 pm to 8 pm.

Breakfast includes seafood omelettes, Belgian waffles and other favorites, while lunch includes sandwiches, burgers and seafood dishes. Open daily, 8 am-midnight.

DINING IN

If you're staying at one of the many efficiency-style hotels along the Overseas Highway, or traveling by RV, you'll probably have a kitchen that needs some stocking. Small food markets are located throughout the Keys; ask your hotel concierge or property manager for help in finding the one nearest you. Large grocery chains throughout the Keys include **Publix** and **Winn-Dixie**. In Key West, you'll find Publix in the Searstown Shopping Center, 3316 N. Roosevelt Boulevard.

You'll also find Publix stores at Tradewinds Plaza, Key Largo, MM 101 (O) and Marathon, MM 50 (B). Winn Dixie stores are in Key Largo, MM 106 (B), and Tavernier, MM 91 (B).

After Dark

If you're dining waterside in the Florida Keys, your evening will probably segue into a night of music and dancing since so many waterfront restaurants have adjacent tiki bars featuring live entertainment and tropical drinks.

There are bars and lounges up and down the Overseas Highway, but Key West is really the epicenter of nightlife in the Florida Keys. Just like places in the Northeast that claim, "George Washington slept here," bars in Key West like to say, "Hemingway drank here." Follow in the footsteps of the famous and the infamous while doing the "Duval Crawl," hitting the bars along Duval Street.

Of course, nightlife in the Keys can also mean theater and concerts, so check the arts listings for information on those activities.

Following are some of the bars, lounges and clubs that light up the Keys at night.

Upper, Middle & Lower Keys

Caribbean Club
Toss a few back at the spot where scenes from the classic Bogey and Bacall movie, *Key Largo*, were filmed. Happy hour is 4-6 pm. A rock band plays Friday and Saturday nights until the wee hours. MM 104 (B), Key Largo, ☎ 305-451-9970.

Bogie's Café
Located at the Holiday Inn, Bogie's features live entertainment in its tiki bar Friday and Saturday

nights until 9 pm. MM 100 (O), Key Largo, ☎ 305-451-2121.

SunCruz Casino
Vegas-style excitement on the high seas. The fun includes slots, blackjack, craps, roulette and sportsbook, along with welcome cocktails, complimentary appetizers and live entertainment. Cruises sail nightly at 5 pm, 7 pm and 9:30 pm. Launching from the Holiday Inn Key Largo Resort, MM 100 (O), Key Largo, ☎ 305-451-0000 or 800-THE-KEYS

Snapper's Waterfront Saloon
Relax in one of three bars, including a sports bar and the Turtle Club Raw Bar, where a one-man band performs a variety of music styles. MM 94.5 (O), Key Largo, ☎ 305-852-5956.

Jammer's
Enjoy fun and games in the Jammer's game room, featuring pool tables, air hockey and a big-screen TV. Open until midnight weekdays and until 1 am Fridays and Saturdays. MM 86.7 (O), Islamorada, ☎ 305-852-8786.

Holiday Isle
Day or night, Holiday Isle entertains. Lounges include the Tiki Bar, serving up refreshing frozen rumrunners, with reggae performed daily and rock at night from 8:30 pm. MM 84 (O), Islamorada, ☎ 305-664-2321.

Volcano Club
Volcano Club welcomes ages 18 and older.

The DJs at this dance club spin tunes ranging from disco to rock from 10 pm to 2 am. There's no cover charge, unless you're under 21. MM 82.2 (B), next to the Sunset Inn, Islamorada, ☎ 305-664-8022.

Lorelei Cabana Bar
Offering several full-service bars in an open-air environment, Lorelei hosts a nightly sunset celebration from their sunset viewing beach. Live entertainment nightly from 6-10 pm ranges from blues to jazz or Jimmy Buffett tunes. MM 82 (B), Islamorada, ☎ 305-664-4338.

Woody's
Feeling brave? Get up and sing with their three-screen laser karaoke, featuring an extensive song collection. Karaoke starts at 6 pm. At 10 pm, Big Dick & the Extenders perform a raucous adult comedy and music show. MM 82 (B), Islamorada, ☎ 305-664-4335.

Dockside Lounge at Sombrero Marina
Open nightly until midnight, the lounge features a live band from 6-9 pm. A small dance floor invites dancing under the stars. MM 50 (O), Marathon, ☎ 305-743-0000.

Tiki Bar at Looe Key Reef Resort
Enjoy island-style drinks and dancing to a live band, Friday and Saturday nights from 7-11 pm. MM 27.5 (O), ☎ 305-872-2215.

Key West

The following Key West establishments are located in Old Town.

The Bull & Whistle Bar
Called the last of the old-time Duval Street open-air bars, the Bull invites you in to relax and watch the Duval crowd go by. Bands are featured on weekends. Upstairs at the Whistle Bar, which is more of a local hangout, a wrap-around balcony overlooks Duval Street. The bar also offers pool tables. Final-

ly, on the top level is the Garden of Eden, a clothing-optional bar. All are open until 4 am daily. Corner of Duval and Caroline streets, ☎ 305-296-4545.

Green Parrot Bar
A Key West landmark since 1890, the Green Parrot typifies the island's irreverent, laid-back spirit. Bartenders are friendly, beer is ice-cold, and there's "no sniveling allowed." The juke box is stocked with blues, reggae, rockabilly and rock classics. Live performers take the stage at 10 pm, though not every night. Relax with pool, darts and pinball. 601 Whitehead Street, ☎ 305-294-6133.

Hog's Breath Saloon
A popular hangout for locals, Hog's Breath offers a restaurant and raw bar. If you stop by early, happy hour is from 5-7 pm. Live entertainment is featured nightly until 2 am. 400 Front Street, ☎ 305-296-4222. www.hogsbreath.com.

PT's Late Night Bar and Grill
With 10 television sets broadcasting sporting events, PT's is a sport lover's nirvana. It's also a great place to play, boasting a big pool table, golf game machine and trivia whiz machine that also plays solitaire and poker. The restaurant serves down-home American favorites in huge portions. For late-night snackers, food is served until 4 am. Unlike many open-air Key West bars, PT's is completely enclosed and air conditioned. 902 Caroline Street, ☎ 305-296-4245.

Sloppy Joe's
Here's the famous Key West watering hole favored by Ernest Hemingway, which officially opened on Dec. 5, 1933, the day Prohibition was repealed. Today, Sloppy Joe's jalousie doors still open onto Duval

Street and the long, curving bar serves large drinks virtually any hour, day or night. A restaurant offers a variety of nibbles, sandwiches and platters, and entertainment runs the gamut from bluegrass to rock. Sloppy Joe's also hosts the annual Hemingway Lookalike Contest in July. 201 Duval Street, ☎ 305-294-5717. www.sloppyjoes.com.

★ DID YOU KNOW?

Sloppy Joe's moved from across the street to its present location on May 5, 1937 after a rent increase from $3 to $4 a week that owner Joe Russell refused to pay. Business was never interrupted during the move, though; in fact, customers simply picked up their drinks and carried them down the block to 201 Duval Street.

The Keys A to Z

Banks

Bank of America (☎ 800-299-2265), **First National Bank** (☎ 305-294-4817), **First Union** (☎ 800-275-3862), **Republic** (☎ 800-MYBANK1) and **TIB Bank of the Keys** (☎ 305-294-6330) have locations throughout the Keys.

County

Monroe

Dentists

Key Largo Dental Associates
MM 99.1 (Median) . . . . . ☎ 305-451-3204

Islamorada Dental Service
MM 81.9 (B) . . . . . ☎ 305-664-4282

Marathon Dental
MM 50 (B) . . . . . ☎ 305-743-9266

Island Dental Associates
Key West . . . . . ☎ 305-294-6696

Old Town Dental Group
Key West . . . . . ☎ 305-296-8541

Dry Cleaners

Islamorada Dry Cleaners
MM 81 (O) . . . . . ☎ 305-664-5060

Universal Cleaners

Key West . . . . . ☎ 305-296-5051

Emergency Contacts

Any life-threatening emergency . . . . . ☎ 911

Diver's Alert Network
Emergencies . . . . . ☎ 800-446-2671

Police

Upper Keys . . . . . ☎ 305-853-3211
Middle Keys . . . . ☎ 305-743-5380 or 305-289-2430
Lower Keys . . . . . ☎ 305-745-3184
Key West. . . . . ☎ 305-296-2424

Walk-in Clinics

Keys Rapid Care
MM 101 (O), Key Largo . . . . . ☎ 305-853-2666

Dr. José Pico
MM 92.1 (B), Tavernier . . . . . ☎ 305-852-9001

Big Pine Medical Center
MM 30 (O), Big Pine Key . . . . . ☎ 305- 872-3321

Hospitals

Mariner's Hospital
MM 91.5 (B) . . . . . ☎ 305-852-4418

Mariner's Hospital has a decompression chamber.

Fisherman's Hospital
MM 48.5, (O) . . . . . ☎ 305-743-5533

Lower Florida Keys Medical Center
Key West . . . . . ☎ 305-294-5531

Newspapers

Local papers include ***The Reporter***, covering the Upper Keys and Marathon, and Key West-based ***Island News***. Both are weekly. ***The Key West Citizen*** is published six days a week. Also, the daily ***Miami Herald*** is available throughout the Keys.

Pharmacies

Eckerd (☎ 800-325-3737) and **Walgreens** (☎ 800-925-4733) have locations throughout the Keys and Key West. In Key Largo, **Kmart** (☎ 866-KMART-4-U) and **Winn-Dixie** (☎ 305-451-0328) both have pharmacies as well.

Photo Labs

There are **Eckerd Express** (☎ 800-325-3737) and **Walgreens** (☎ 800-925-4733) photo labs throughout the Keys and Key West, along with a number of local shops, including **Cam-Plus** at MM 82.9, ☎ 305-664-5475.

Post Offices

Post Office branches in the Keys are open weekdays, 8 am-4:30 pm. The Islamorada branch is also open Saturdays, 8 am-noon.

Post Office info (24 hours). . . . . ☎ 800-275-8777
Key Largo, MM 100 (B) . . . . . ☎ 305-451-3155
Tavernier, MM 91.2 (B). . . . . ☎ 305-853-1052
Islamorada, MM 82.8 (O) . . . . . ☎ 305-664-4738

Long Key, MM 68.5 (O) . . . . . ☎ 305-664-4112
Marathon, MM 51 (O) . . . . . ☎ 305-743-5238
Big Pine Key, MM 30 (B). . . . . ☎ 305-872-2531
Summerland Key, MM 24.7 (O) . . ☎ 305-745-3391
Key West, 400 Whitehead Street . . ☎ 800-275-8777

Tourist Information

The best source of information is the **Florida Keys & Key West Visitors Bureau**, ☎ 305-296-1552 or 800-FLA-KEYS, www.fla-keys.com. Other sources include the following.

Florida Keys Assistance Line . . . . . ☎ 800-771-KEYS (5397)

For more detailed information on the individual Keys, call or stop by these chambers of commerce.

Key Largo, MM 106 (B) . . . . . ☎ 800-822-1088
Islamorada, MM 82.1 (B) . . . . . ☎ 800-FAB-KEYS
Marathon, MM 53.5 (B). . . . ☎ 800-2-MARATHON
Lower Keys, MM 31 (O). . . . ☎ 800-USA-ESCAPE
Key West, 402 Wall Street . . . . . ☎ 800-LAST-KEY

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